IMPLEMENTING Common Core State Standards and Assessments

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

UPDATED MARCH 2012

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IN THIS WORKBOOK

1. INTRODUCTION

Part of **IMPLEMENTING Common Core State Standards and Assessments**

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IN THIS SECTION

We are at one of those rare, maybe once-in-a-lifetime moments. After 30 years of fits and starts, true transformational reform in education is not only possible but also entirely within our grasp. In the last few years, we have seen a number of significant shifts occur: College and career readiness for all students is the new national norm, the majority of states have adopted internationally benchmarked K–12 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English, and most states are participating in a Race to the Top assessment consortium. The nation has, by and large, coalesced around a common — and rigorous — set of expectations and goals that will put all students on a trajectory to graduate from high school ready for college, careers and citizenship.

As remarkable as the effort has been to get to this point, the true transformation will occur only if these goals are put into practice and fully implemented for the benefit of every student, in every classroom, in every state. Can it be done? Much of the answer to that question rests squarely with you, the state and district leaders charged with making the CCSS a reality in schools and classrooms. Leading change within a school district or state education agency takes hard, sustained effort. No greater task confronts state and district leaders today than preparing students to meet the new expectations. Trying financial circumstances and stretched capacity only compound the degree of difficulty. Yet the work is critical. The ability of students to reach their full potential — and by extension, our nation's ability to compete and lead — depends on your ability to take full advantage of this moment in time.

By adopting the CCSS, your state has taken a critical first step forward. You now have a clear road map — anchored in college and career readiness and internationally benchmarked — for what students in your state must know and be able to do to succeed. With this road map comes the chance to fundamentally rethink your system, including long-held notions about educator training, professional development and instructional materials — not to mention the transition from where you are today to where you hope to be by the time the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments are given.

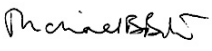
You will face a choice in the days ahead: The transition to new standards and related tests can be done in the way it has always been done, or the CCSS can be at the heart of more aggressive instructional reform efforts.

What would this look like? Rethinking instructional reform means deliberately building on good practice in leading districts while injecting urgency and capacity into struggling districts. It means understanding how to get aligned instructional materials in the hands of the right teachers at the right time and how to ensure professional development design reflects best practices and accurately targets student needs. And it means being relentlessly curious about the impact of your implementation efforts, so nothing will surprise you once students sit down to take their first PARCC assessment.

Our two organizations are committed to helping you succeed. We have combined Achieve's content knowledge with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute's implementation expertise in performance management. The result is the Common Core Implementation Workbook, which can help you organize for the transition to the CCSS. The workbook contains a framework for how to put all the relevant policies in place and offers sample timelines, relevant best practices, implementation advice and critical exercises to guide this important effort.

We hope that the workbook, in addition to the related state team gatherings and webinars, will help your team take maximum advantage of this moment in history. We look forward to helping you succeed.

Michael Cohen
President
Achieve



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1. Introduction

"The [Common Core State] standards establish clear and consistent goals for learning that will prepare America's children for success in college and work."[1] This is the aspiration behind the newly developed and adopted Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Soon, rigorous content will be taught throughout elementary, middle and high school, with a focus on how to apply this knowledge. Doing so will equip students from every walk of life to compete with their peers in top-performing countries.

First, though, state and district leaders must diligently prepare for the implementation of the new standards. Broadly speaking, complex policies and practices must be organized so that policy intent at the state level actually translates to classroom practice across the state. This means aligning instructional materials and curricular units to the CCSS; conducting highly effective professional development; and redesigning data, assessment and accountability systems to reflect the expectations in the CCSS. It also means mobilizing supports for students with disabilities and other challenging populations. Finally, state and district leaders must work with systems of higher education to guarantee that new mechanisms for teacher evaluation and preparation accurately reflect expectations for student learning. Integrating all of these policy efforts is critical.

With the right planning, high-capacity districts can be in the vanguard of this effort. Here, the state education agency's role is to ensure that the work occurs consistently across the state. **The state agency does not necessarily need to lead the work directly, nor does it have to treat all districts in the same way.** By differentiating among districts based on capacity, the state can create networks that leverage high-capacity districts and better target its limited resources where they are most needed — to helping struggling districts. Realizing this vision demands that the state also create feedback loops, monitor performance and solve problems as they arise.

The implementation challenge looms large. In response, Achieve and the U.S. Education Delivery Institute have developed a **practical Common Core Implementation Workbook for all states in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).** The workbook uses a proven performance management methodology known as "delivery" to lay out clear action steps for states and districts. It provides relevant information, case stories of good practice, key questions and hands-on exercises for leadership teams to complete together. Regardless of your timeline, the workbook offers state and district leaders the means to plan for the CCSS and then drive successful implementation.

The discipline of delivery was first developed in 2001 under U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair. This approach to public-sector management is widely credited with helping Blair's government meet most of its policy targets for a range of public services. Delivery has five stages, which move a system from its aspiration to planning to implementation.[2] Few of these elements are new; however, delivery provides a systematic and comprehensive way to think about implementation. The approach connects ongoing project management to strategic planning, all with student outcomes in mind. Today, state education agencies in Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts and Tennessee have adopted and refined the delivery approach and are moving from managing projects to managing for results. The same approach can help states elsewhere improve student achievement by successfully implementing the CCSS and related assessments.

How To Read This Workbook: The Elements of CCSS Implementation

This is a once-in-a-generation chance to match student performance against the best in the world. To take advantage of this opportunity, state and district leaders must put the CCSS at the heart of broader efforts to create aligned instructional systems. This means tackling a complex and integrated policy set **as a whole —** thinking through policies on formative and summative assessment (and related technologies); coherent professional development; course approvals and revisions; student supports; new instructional materials; changes to teacher preparation, evaluation and licensing; and improvements to the existing data system and accountability framework.

The diagram below is one way to work through this integrated policy set. This workbook will cover all the shaded implementation actions and critical questions in the diagram. Future chapters may address the remaining actions and questions.

Organize To Implement	Aspiration (p. 3.3)	Internal leadership team (p. 3.5)	Timeline (p. 3.9)	Budget (p. 3.17)	Gap analysis (p. 3.24)	Stakeholder communications (p. 4.1)

		Critical questions					
		Where are we now?	What would success look like in 2014–15?	What are our strategies to achieve success?	How will the strategies be implemented through the field to the classroom?	How will we connect strategies to expected outcomes?	How will we monitor progress and stay on track? (p. 11.1)
Take Action: Implementation Actions	Align instructional materials (p. 5.1)						
	Train educators (p. 6.1)						
	Transition technology and assessment system (p. 7.1)						
	Transition accountability and data reporting system (p. 8.1)						
	Align teacher preparation, evaluation and licensing (p. 9.1)						
	Inform student transitions to higher education (p. 10.1)						

Desired Student Outcomes

Covered in this workbook

Anticipated

The workbook begins with a **diagnostic assessment** to help you determine where your CCSS implementation effort is going well and areas of challenge that merit additional attention. Findings from the diagnostic should then guide how you use the rest of the workbook. Page numbers for each relevant section are within the diagnostic so you can quickly focus attention on areas of true need.

After the diagnostic, the next sections of the workbook focus on how the state agency and school districts can **organize for implementation.** These actions undergird the entire implementation effort. Chapters 3 and 4 contain concrete information on how to shape the leadership team, create a timeline, set the budget, manage external stakeholders and form a communications plan to accompany your implementation strategy.

The workbook then offers a set of **implementation actions** that consist of the actual work of the CCSS transition. Chapters 5 and 6 help you answer the critical questions for two key actions: how to align curricular and instructional materials and how to train educators on the CCSS. Though many states will take until 2013 or later to implement all the complex changes associated with the transition to the CCSS, most have indicated that these two actions will be their first steps. As the diagram on the previous page shows, additional key actions are required to align your instructional system to the CCSS. Chapter 7 addresses the broad transformation many schools will need to make as they become true digital learning environments where technology is integrated into all parts of the school experience, including instruction and assessment. Chapter 8 identifies ways to advance and align college- and career-ready accountability systems with CCSS implementation. Chapter 10 examines ways to strengthen student transitions to higher education in light of the CCSS. The workbook ends with Chapter 11, which answers the final question — **how to monitor progress and sustain momentum,** a topic that obviously applies across all the implementation actions.

Within each chapter of the Common Core Implementation Workbook, you will find one or more of the following:

- **Diagnostic questions** to help your team gauge the extent to which you have already addressed the action(s) in question;
- **A brief narrative** that provides potential options for putting the relevant action(s) in place;
- **Case stories** that illustrate the principles in the narrative; and
- **Exercises** that will help flesh out your implementation strategy and put the relevant action(s) in place.

This workbook is organized in a linear fashion, but only because this medium of communication requires it. In reality, many implementation actions require nonlinear iteration. Moreover, no state or district is starting the planning effort from scratch; each has been leading work on many (or perhaps all) of these actions. Therefore, you should read this workbook as a reference guide for the overall implementation strategy — one that gives you the option to dig deeper in the areas that are critical for your state or district. Where answers already exist, insert them and move on. Elsewhere, honest and critical reflection on the exercises — preferably done together as a leadership team — will help you fill in the blanks.

By completing this workbook, your state or district will have set a clear path for making the most of the transition to the new CCSS and improving instructional practice in classrooms throughout your system. And by participating in the associated webinars and convenings, you will have access to emerging practices across all the states in the PARCC consortium.

Acknowledgments

This workbook was the result of many months of hard work. Achieve and the U.S. Education Delivery Institute (EDI) would like to thank those individuals whose efforts made it possible.

We would like to thank the members of the Achieve and EDI staffs for their tireless efforts on this workbook. Alissa Peltzman provided the overall leadership and guidance for this effort. Alex Harris and Nick Rodriguez played the lead roles in the writing of the report. Special thanks to Marie O'Hara and Lauren Kurczewski for their research contributions, writing and editorial support. Additional thanks to Kate Blosveren, Sandy Boyd, Matt Gandal, Margaret Horn, Stephen Pruitt and Doug Sovde, who shared insights and provided helpful feedback throughout the process.

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Michael Cohen
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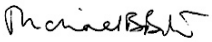

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ENDNOTES

1 National Governors Association and Council for Chief State School Officers (2010). Press release, June 2.

2 Barber, Moffit, & Kihn (2011). *Deliverology 101: A Field Guide for Educational Leaders.*

3 Center for Education Policy (2011). *States' Progress and Challenges in Implementing the Common Core State Standards.*

About Achieve

Achieve is a bipartisan, nonprofit education reform organization that has worked with states, individually and through the 35-state American Diploma Project, for over a decade to ensure that state K–12 standards, graduation requirements, assessments and accountability systems are calibrated to graduate students from high school ready for college, careers and life.

Achieve is leading the effort to make college and career readiness a national priority so that the transition from high school graduation to postsecondary education and careers is seamless. In 2005, Achieve launched the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network. Starting with 13 states, the Network has now grown to include 35 states educating nearly 85 percent of all U.S. public school students. Through the ADP Network, governors, state education officials, postsecondary leaders and business executives work together to improve postsecondary preparation by aligning high school standards, assessments, graduation requirements and accountability systems with the demands of college and careers.

Achieve partnered with the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative, and a number of its staff served on writing and review teams. More recently, Achieve was selected to manage the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The 25-state PARCC consortium was awarded Race to the Top assessment funds to create next-generation assessments in math and English aligned to the CCSS.

About U.S. Education Delivery Institute

The U.S. Education Delivery Institute (EDI) is an innovative nonprofit organization that focuses on implementing large-scale system change in public education. Its mission is to partner with K–12 and higher education systems with ambitious reform agendas and invest in their leaders' capacity to deliver results. By employing a proven approach known as delivery, EDI helps state leaders maintain the necessary focus to plan and drive reform.

EDI provides intensive on-the-ground support, data analytics, ongoing professional development and a network through which state systems can collectively build their capacity. As a result of this work, EDI expects to increase the number of well-prepared students who graduate from high school then enter and succeed in college. EDI emphasizes actions to close the gaps that too often separate low-income students and students of color from others. Its success is based entirely on whether the partner systems achieve these aspirations.

2. REVIEW SYSTEM CAPACITY

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IN THIS SECTION

2. Review System Capacity

The first step for any new implementation effort is to review the system's **current** capacity to deliver its aspiration. Implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will require a clear understanding of the people and organizations that play a part in implementation — as well as an assessment of the extent to which they are already undertaking the essential elements of this work.

The diagnostic tool in this chapter will help you assess your capacity to implement the CCSS. Based on this workbook's organizing framework, the rubric considers the extent and quality of your current implementation plan. It lists the relevant questions and lays out guideposts for what "weak" and "strong" performance look like, ranging from a rating of 1 (weakest) to 4 (strongest). Finally, the rubric defines potential evidence to consider as you rate your own system's capacity.

Complete this assessment with your leadership team before reading further. The pattern that emerges can then guide your use of this workbook — in areas where you rate your planning effort as weaker, you can refer to the relevant section of the workbook, denoted by the page number in the far right column.

Diagnostic Tool

	Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page …
Chapters 3 and 4. Organize To Implement	Aspiration	• No aspiration defined for why the CCSS are important • Aspiration not widely shared	• Department has defined an aspiration for how the CCSS will change classroom practice • Department has secured wide buy-in for aspiration inside and outside the department	• If asked, how many people inside the department can name the aspiration? • What about key players outside the department?	3.3
	Internal leadership team	• Ownership of CCSS implementation is haphazard or unclear	• Department has specified a clear point of accountability or defined multiple points of accountability with clearly delineated responsibility for implementing the CCSS, both inside the department and with external stakeholders (e.g., higher education) • Those in charge have the leverage and/or relationships they need to coordinate the effort	• How many people in the department can name the key people responsible for the CCSS effort and their specific responsibilities? • What about key players outside the department?	3.5
	Timeline	• Timeline is vague or undefined • Only real milestone is the rollout of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment in 2014	• Department has articulated an ambitious but realistic timeline of implementation that will credibly prepare the system for rollout of the PARCC assessments • Timeline defines key areas of work and milestones for each, which should enable tracking of implementation on a monthly or quarterly basis	• Does the timeline exist? • To what extent do those responsible for implementation use it as the guiding reference document for their deadlines?	3.9

Chapters 3 and 4. Organize To Implement

Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page …
Budget	• A cost estimate may have occurred, but little or no thinking has been done about how various state and federal funds will be used to provide sufficient resources	• Department has identified most or all relevant state and federal funds that can be used to fund CCSS implementation • Department has built a comprehensive budget for CCSS implementation that allocates all costs to relevant funding sources and takes into account the restrictions on each	• Does a budget with allocation of federal and state funding sources exist? • How confident are we in its accuracy?	3.16
Gap analysis	• Little effort has been made to compare the system's current content standards to the CCSS	• Department has performed a detailed gap analysis that shows where new state standards will be added and where existing state standards must be augmented, moved or dropped • Department has used this analysis to identify high-priority subject areas and/or grade spans according to the size of the gaps	• Has the gap analysis been performed? • Do those responsible for implementation have a clear idea of the highest priority subject areas and grade spans?	3.23
Guiding coalition	• There is no deliberately identified group of external stakeholders who can drive change at all levels, or such a group is limited in its scope	• At least 7–10 change leaders from key backgrounds share a consistent understanding and are supportive of the aspiration and strategy for CCSS implementation • Department consistently consults and works with this group to guide implementation and communicate to the field	• Can the leadership team name the members of the guiding coalition? • How frequent are the leadership team's interactions with the coalition?	4.3
Communications	• Communications efforts regarding the CCSS are sparse, uncoordinated and one way	• Department has a clear communications plan for CCSS implementation that details the message and objective, audiences, modes of communication, frequency or timing of communication, and messengers • The communications plan includes five-year strategies for ongoing communications with all audiences to maintain support • Audiences understand both what will be accomplished and how	• To what extent do teachers, principals and superintendents in the field understand how their work environments are going to change as a result of the CCSS? • To what extent do core external players understand their responsibilities to make this happen?	4.6

	Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page …
Chapter 5. Implementation Action I: Align Instructional Materials to the CCSS	Strategies to achieve success	• No specific activities have been identified for alignment of instructional materials, or activities are uncoordinated and siloed	• Department and external stakeholders have identified and laid out a balanced and coordinated set of activities that will credibly align instructional materials with the CCSS • Activities are benchmarked against best practices both within and outside the state	• Among those responsible for instructional materials, how many could name the core priority activities? • How confident are we that these activities are the ones with the highest potential for impact?	5.3
	Understanding how the strategies will be implemented through the field to the classroom (i.e., delivery chain)	• Department has not yet articulated how the reform strategy will reach the field — that is, how materials will actually reach and influence teachers and their behavior	• For all relevant activities, department has explicitly laid out the "delivery chain" that runs from the state through regions and local education agencies to schools and classrooms • Delivery chain consists of strong relationships that create a credible path for aligned materials to reach the field, or department has identified weaknesses in the chain and has a plan for addressing them	• Can we explain, in one minute or less, exactly how new instructional materials will be developed or identified and delivered to every classroom in the state?	5.9
	Connecting strategies to expected outcomes (i.e., targets and trajectories)	• Metrics and targets for success have not been identified or are not meaningfully connected to the overall aspiration • No clear path is drawn between the planned activities and the achievement of any targets	• Department has identified a range of metrics — from outcome measures to implementation milestones — that define "success" in aligning instructional materials to the CCSS • Department has set annual targets for each metric through 2014 • The targets and metrics provide feedback on whether the aspiration is being achieved on time and whether the right steps are being taken to achieve it • Activities are sequenced to show how achieving implementation milestones will help department hit the outcome targets	• Can we articulate how we will know whether we are successful with our instructional materials strategy? • Has an analysis been done to show how completing this strategy successfully will result in improved outcomes for students? How credible is it?	5.13

Chapter 6. Implementation Action II: Train Educators on the CCSS and Related Assessments

Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page …
Strategies to achieve success	• No specific activities have been identified for training educators, or activities are uncoordinated and siloed	• Department and external stakeholders have identified and laid out a balanced and coordinated set of activities that will credibly train educators to use the CCSS • Activities are benchmarked against best practices both within and outside the state • A sustainability strategy is in place to support long-term implementation of aligned professional development (e.g., creating systems for training trainers)	• Among those responsible for professional development, how many could name the core priority activities? • How confident are we that these activities are the ones with the highest potential for impact?	6.4
Understanding how the strategies will be implemented through the field to the classroom (i.e., delivery chain)	• Department has not yet articulated how the reform strategy will reach the field — that is, how professional development for educators will be identified, adapted and deployed to have an impact on educator behavior	• For all relevant activities, department has explicitly laid out the delivery chain that runs from the state through regions and local education agencies to schools and classrooms • Delivery chain consists of strong relationships that create a credible path for professional development to reach the field, or department has identified weaknesses in the chain and has a plan for addressing them	• Can we explain, in one minute or less, exactly how new professional development will be identified, adapted and delivered to every educator in the state?	6.8
Connecting strategies to expected outcomes (i.e., targets and trajectories)	• Metrics and targets for success have not been identified or are not meaningfully connected to the overall aspiration • No clear path is drawn between the planned activities and the achievement of any targets	• Department has identified a range of metrics — from outcome measures to implementation milestones — that define "success" in training educators on the CCSS • Department has set annual targets for each metric through 2014 • The targets and metrics provide feedback on whether the aspiration is being achieved on time and whether the right steps are being taken to achieve it • Activities are sequenced to show how achieving implementation milestones will help department hit the outcome targets	• Can we articulate how we will know whether we are successful with our professional development strategy? • Has an analysis been done to show how completing this strategy successfully will result in improved outcomes for students? How credible is it?	6.14

Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page …
Gap analysis	• Little effort has been made to set a standard for readiness and compare current technological capacity to that standard	• State readiness team has defined what readiness looks like • Team has performed gap analysis against this definition of readiness for each district	• Does the team have a clear idea of what readiness looks like? • Has the analysis been performed to identify the specific readiness gaps in each district?	7.4
Differentiation of districts according to their individual readiness needs	• Department treats all districts similarly • Department has not been deliberate about segmenting districts according to their various technology needs	• Department has used data on technology gaps in every district to differentiate its districts into groups that have different areas of need • This differentiation drives the way the department interacts with districts on this issue	• Have districts been segmented according to varying needs? • Is the method of segmentation useful for differentiating the type of support that each district would get?	7.5
Plan for working with districts to close gaps	• Department does not have a plan for closing gaps that is operationally driving its work in this area • Few or no specific activities have been identified for helping districts fill technology gaps • Those activities that have been defined are insufficient to close the gaps at the scale required across the state	• Department has laid out a specific and actionable plan for achieving readiness in 100 percent of districts • The plan includes a balanced and coordinated set of activities to close readiness gaps • Activities are targeted toward districts or segments of districts according to their identified needs, with a clear delivery chain for how to reach each district or segment	• Is there a coherent plan in place for making the technology transition? • Does the plan include priority strategies for filling readiness gaps in every district? • How confident are we that these strategies are the ones with the highest potential for impact? • How confident are we that we can reach every district or segment of districts with these strategies at scale?	7.12
Connecting strategies to expected outcomes and milestones	• Milestones and targets for success have not been identified • No clear path is drawn between the planned strategies and the achievement of targets or milestones	• State readiness team has set semiannual targets through 2014–15 that align with the PARCC/Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium readiness tool data collection windows • The milestones and targets reflect the sequencing of priority strategies and when they are expected to have an impact	• Can we articulate, based on our planned activities, what level of readiness we should expect to see following each of the readiness tool testing windows? • How confident are we that the expected changes in readiness levels will result from the strategies we are undertaking to fill gaps?	7.17
Establishing feedback loops and routines for monitoring progress	• The state readiness team has not established regular practices for gathering feedback from the field on readiness progress or checking in as a team on that progress	• The state readiness team has established methods for gathering all necessary feedback from the field on readiness progress (including, but not limited to, the readiness tool) • The state readiness team has established regular routines to monitor the information provided through feedback loops	• How will we know how well prepared each district is between now and 2014? • In particular, how will we know this for elements of readiness not included in the readiness tool? • Do we meet regularly as a team to monitor progress and problem-solve if we are off track?	7.19

Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page …
Setting statewide performance goals	• Goals are tied to expectations below college and career readiness or not aligned to the CCSS • No connections have been made between strategies and meeting the goals • Goals are set only at the state level and are not recognized at the local level	• Statewide performance goals are tied to the CCSS and other college and career readiness expectations • Goals are used to focus CCSS implementation strategy • Goals are set at the state, district and school levels and by subgroup	• Do state leaders routinely reference goals? • Does the state tie the CCSS implementation strategy to meeting the goals? • Does progress toward the goals frame conversations between the state and districts?	8.12
Transitioning the differentiation and classification system	• System relies on indicators not linked to the CCSS and college and career readiness • System classifies only top- and bottom-performing schools and districts	• System clearly differentiates all schools and districts based on status and growth metrics aligned to CCSS and other college and career readiness indicators • System classifies all schools and districts with clear implications for recognition, support and intervention	• What are the indicators and metrics with the most weight within the system? • Is it clear how each classification ties to support and intervention?	8.24
Aligning the statewide system of support and intervention	• Diagnostic reviews do not consider college and career readiness indicators • System is operated by personnel and processes disconnected from CCSS implementation	• Supports and interventions are aligned to the intensity and type suggested by school or district capacity to implement the CCSS • CCSS implementation efforts are strongly linked to the personnel and processes in the system of support	• What data and questions are asked to tailor support and intervention? • How are CCSS implementation strategies differentiated to schools and districts based on classification?	8.29
Reporting timely and actionable data	• The state report card for districts and schools does not align to the state's priority goals and classification system • Indicators of student progress on the CCSS and other college and career readiness measures are not prominent in state reporting • Educators and parents do not have aggregate or individual information about student performance on the CCSS	• State report card for districts and schools clearly shows progress on CCSS-aligned assessments and other college and career readiness indicators • State report card displays progress toward statewide student performance goals and reports the classification of each district and school • State ensures that educators can access and use data indicators that predict student performance and diagnose specific needs on the CCSS • Parents access and use aggregate data about school and district performance as well as individual data about student performance on the CCSS	• What indicators are emphasized on the state's report card for districts and schools? • Does the report card show progress on the statewide performance goals? • Does the report card include information about a school and district's classification? • What data resources do parents and educators have to track individual student progress on the CCSS?	8.29

Chapter 10. Implementation Action V: Student Transitions to Higher Education

Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page …
Collaborative working team	• No identified group of internal and external stakeholders has been identified to manage the higher education system's adaptations as a result of the CCSS	• The higher education system has specified a clear point of accountability or defined multiple points of accountability with clearly delineated responsibility for transitioning the CCSS • A balanced, diverse, motivated team with appropriate spheres of influence and understanding has committed to the effort • Those in charge have the leverage, time and/or relationships they need to coordinate the effort	• How many people in our higher education system can name the key people responsible for the CCSS alignment effort and their specific responsibilities? • What about key players outside the department?	10.5
Delivery plan	• Ownership of the plan to align first-year courses, developmental modules/courses and the CCSS is haphazard or unclear • No specific activities have been identified for alignment of courses, or activities are uncoordinated and siloed	• Internal and external stakeholders have identified and laid out a balanced and coordinated set of activities that will credibly align • Leadership and stakeholder engagement, level of awareness and shared understanding, criteria for quality, and logic and coherence of plan are addressed • A clear timetable and set of milestones to measure progress has been established	• To what extent do our content faculty understand how the CCSS will improve the work they do in their developmental modules/ courses and their first-year, credit-bearing courses? • Among higher education faculty responsible for providing in-service training for veteran teachers, how many have a deep understanding of the CCSS? • Can we articulate, based on our plan, specific areas or ideas for strengthening the coherence of our course offerings?	10.6
Evaluating past and present course alignment	• No coordinated effort to inventory the universe of first-year and developmental modules and courses offered at the postsecondary level has been completed	• Higher education system has performed an inventory of all courses implicated by the CCSS and their level of alignment • The higher education system has prioritized courses and modules to cull, adapt, etc. in light of the CCSS	• Can we articulate, based on the alignment exercise, a timeline for phasing in changes to courses? • Do we meet regularly as a team to monitor progress and problem-solve if we are off track? • Are there specific challenges should be addressed outside of our working group?	10.6

Critical question or action	Weak (1)	Strong (4)	Types of evidence to consider	For more, see page …
Monitoring data	• Performance dialogues make little reference to data • Data may occasionally be brought up but not in a systematic and consistent way	• Performance dialogues center on the range of metrics that department has used to set its priority targets • More frequent data (leading indicators, intermediate metrics, process milestones) are discussed when outcome data are unavailable	• How frequently are performance data discussed by the system leader and those who are accountable?	11.3
Sharing progress with the system leader	• Performance dialogues are haphazard and often take place only in the context of addressing immediate and urgent issues	• Performance dialogues are true routines: They are scheduled regularly and given consistent priority by the system leader and key senior managers • Routines balance frequency and depth to give the system leader a comprehensive view of all priorities regularly	• How regular and/or consistent are performance dialogues: – From the point of view of the chief? – From the point of view of those accountable? • In the course of a given month, are these routines giving the system leader the right performance information at the right level of depth to drive decisionmaking?	11.3
Regularly solving problems to get implementation back on track	• Problem-solving may occur but only on an ad hoc basis to "fight fires"	• Routines surface problems that may require additional attention • As problems arise, the system categorizes and allocates resources to them according to severity and urgency • Department staff exhibit a culture of problem-solving in addressing both large and small issues	• When an issue arises at the leadership level, how is it handled? Is there a standard operating procedure that effectively gets the issue resolved with minimal disruption? • If we had to guess, what percentage of issues are resolved at the leadership level vs. lower down?	11.8

EXERCISE: DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

Purpose: Use this template to assess your capacity to implement the CCSS.

Chapter	Critical question or action	Rating (1–4)	Evidence
Chapters 3 and 4. Organize To Implement	Aspiration		
	Internal leadership team		
	Timeline		
	Budget		
	Gap analysis		
	Guiding coalition		
	Communications		
Chapter 5. Implementation Action I: Align Instructional Materials to the CCSS	Strategies to achieve success		
	Delivery chain		
	Targets and trajectory		
Chapter 6. Implementation Action II: Train Educators on the CCSS and Related Assessments	Strategies to achieve success		
	Delivery chain		
	Targets and trajectory		

Chapter	Critical question or action	Rating (1–4)	Evidence
Chapter 7. Implementation Action III: Transition Technology and Assessment System	Gap analysis		
	Differentiation of districts according to their individual readiness needs		
	Plan for working with districts to close gaps		
	Connecting strategies to expected outcomes and milestones		
	Establishing feedback loops and routines for monitoring progress		
Chapter 8. Implementation Action IV: Transition Accountability and Data Reporting System	Setting statewide performance goals		
	Transitioning the differentiation and classification system		
	Aligning the statewide system of support and intervention		
	Reporting timely and actionable data		
Chapter 10. Implementation Action V: Student Transitions to Higher Education	Collaborative working team		
	Delivery plan		
	Evaluating past and present course alignment		
Chapter 11. Put It All Together: Establish Routines To Monitor Performance and Solve Problems	Monitoring data		
	Sharing progress with the system leader		
	Regularly solving problems		

NOTES

3. ORGANIZE TO IMPLEMENT

The Basics

Part of **IMPLEMENTING Common Core State Standards and Assessments**

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

To download the full workbook, go to www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook

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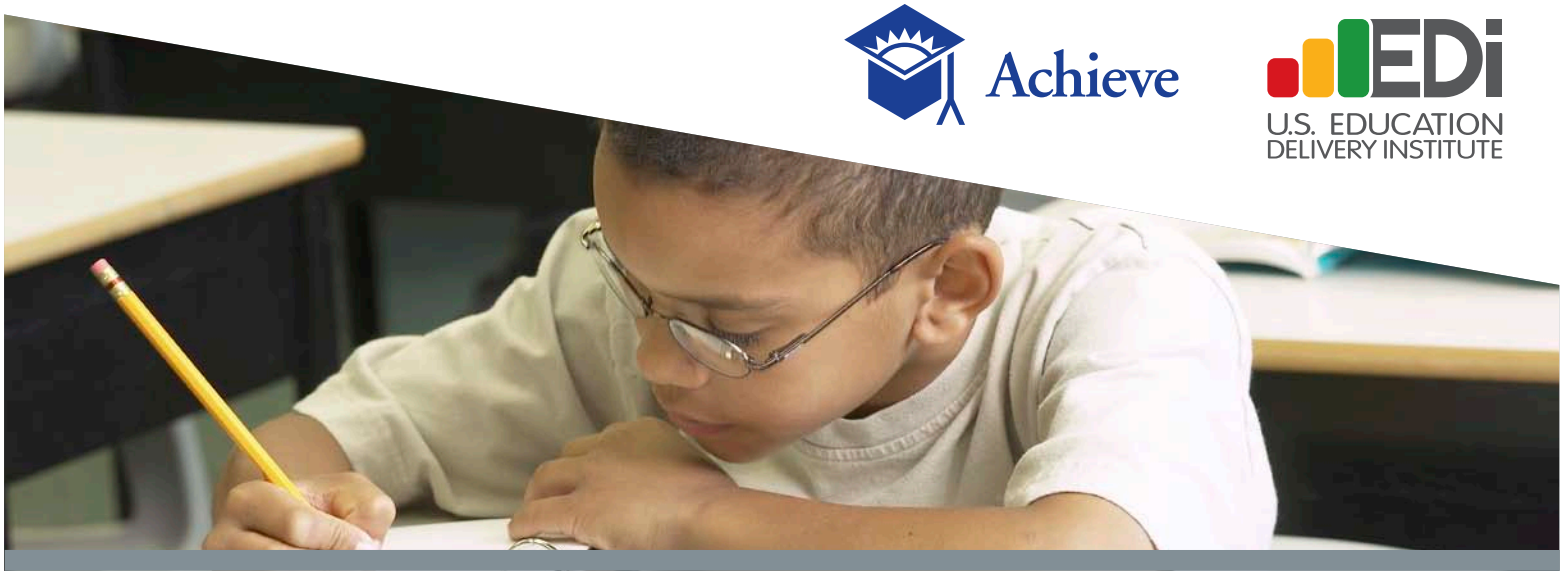


IN THIS SECTION

3. Organize To Implement: The Basics

Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- Is the system's aspiration for students clear and widely shared?
- Has your state conducted a thorough analysis of the gap between current state standards and the Common Core State Standards?
- Is there a designated leadership team with the focus, tools and skill set needed to drive implementation?
- Are the budget and implementation timeline clearly articulated and sufficient to achieve the aspiration?

Planning begins with setting an aspiration. Then, several other building blocks position implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for success: a talented team to lead the delivery effort with a clear timeline and budget to accomplish the work, an understanding of how drastic the changes from current to future content standards will be, and a clear communications strategy to engage external support.

Set the Aspiration

The aspiration is a powerful tool that signifies a shared understanding of what success looks like. It must be clear, measurable and understandable to everyone. In the case of the CCSS, the aspiration will describe the impact you expect the new content standards and related assessments to have on student learning by 2014–15. At first glance, this question may seem relatively easy to answer; however, once your leadership team begins to unpack the key components, you may realize that properly answering the question is actually quite complex. ***You can learn more about setting an aspiration here.*** The aspiration may also identify the theory of action that undergirds your state's reform agenda.

CASE STORY: DELAWARE

Though Delaware student performance has long been above average, leaders in the First State are no longer satisfied. Now, these leaders publicly assert a new aspiration for Delaware: "Every single student in our system will graduate college and career ready, with the freedom to choose his or her life's course. Our education system needs to change because the world is changing, and because it's the right thing to do. We must prepare our students to meet new standards, or we limit their life choices. Our new standards reflect how prepared our students really are. Half of our student population (representing tens of thousands of students) will likely not meet the new standards. The Delaware Education Plan will improve student readiness through more rigorous standards and assessments, better use of data, more effective teachers and increasing the support to low performing schools."[1]

EXERCISE: DEFINE YOUR ASPIRATION

Purpose: To clearly articulate the importance of the CCSS and share this aspiration with key stakeholders throughout your state.

Who should participate? The system leader or district superintendent should complete this exercise, with the input of the broader leadership team.

Directions: For each of the areas of CCSS implementation below:

1. Begin with the expectations for students: What are the relevant performance targets for 2014–15? Explain the rationale behind those targets.
2. Describe the current state for each implementation action. What is working well? Where is more planning needed?
3. For each action, describe the ideal state in 2014–15.
4. For each action, explain why it is important that your state make the proposed changes.

		Where are we now?	Where do we want to be in 2014–15?	Rationale
Student performance				
Implementation actions	• Curricula and instructional materials			
	• Professional development			
	• Assessment and accountability			
	• Teacher preparation, evaluation and licensing			
	• Student transitions to higher education			

Form an Internal Leadership Team To Determine Timeline, Assign Responsibility and Monitor Progress

Ownership of the policy elements related to the CCSS sit in many different places within the state education agency; this poses a major challenge for the implementation effort. Thus, states should put together a team tasked with creating an overall vision, timeline, phase-in strategy and work plan for implementation. This **strategic implementation team** will reinforce the delivery message by engaging stakeholders, providing timely updates on the work to partners, and establishing and monitoring key feedback loops.

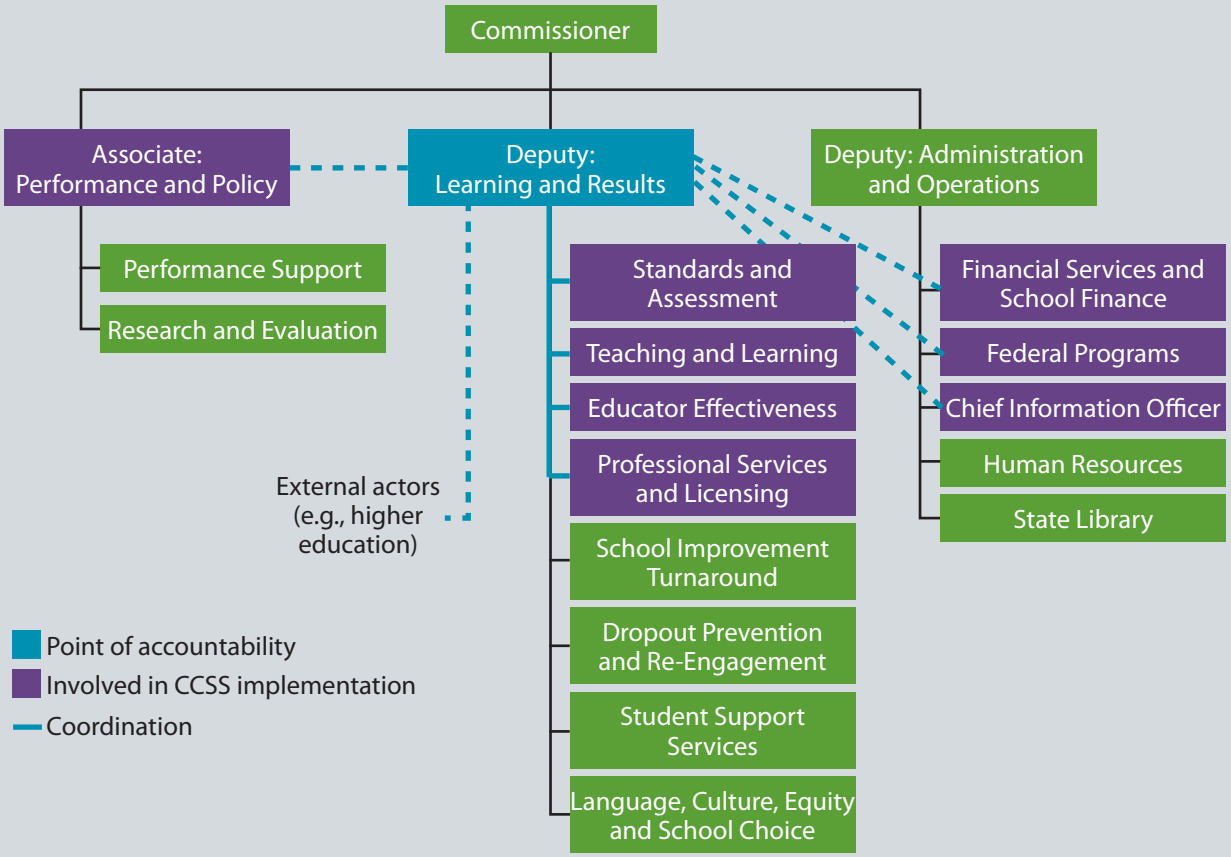
The strategic implementation team must know your current state standards well, have the capacity to consider and make recommendations about each of the elements that should be in the state's plan, and ultimately execute and oversee such a plan. The team should include representatives from the state department of education (curriculum and instruction, assessment, data, district support, special education, English language learners), higher education and the governor's office. Key, too, are policy, budget and communications experts. The team should also include representation from vital districts and schools, including teachers, administrators and content area experts.

As the implementation effort proceeds, your strategic implementation team will likely need to create other working teams to delve into specific issues, such as professional development design, and recommend how to proceed. Consider what mechanism is in place to ensure fluid communication among the department of education, governor's office and other state education entities such as your higher education system or your teacher licensing board. Consider also what mechanism can be used to provide project oversight to the agency's leadership team (e.g., the chief and key deputies).

There are two general models that you can follow to have a single point of accountability:

1. **Assign a deputy or associate commissioner** to drive the overall effort. This person will be held accountable for the deliverables and outcomes expected of the overall effort. He or she must be senior enough to be able to manage and coordinate the heads of the various units that will be involved. The advantage of this approach is coherence, giving both the system leader and those working on the effort somewhere to turn for leadership. Systems that choose this route must find a way to give this leader sufficient leverage to coordinate multiple units within the state education agency — even when the leader does not have direct line authority over them.

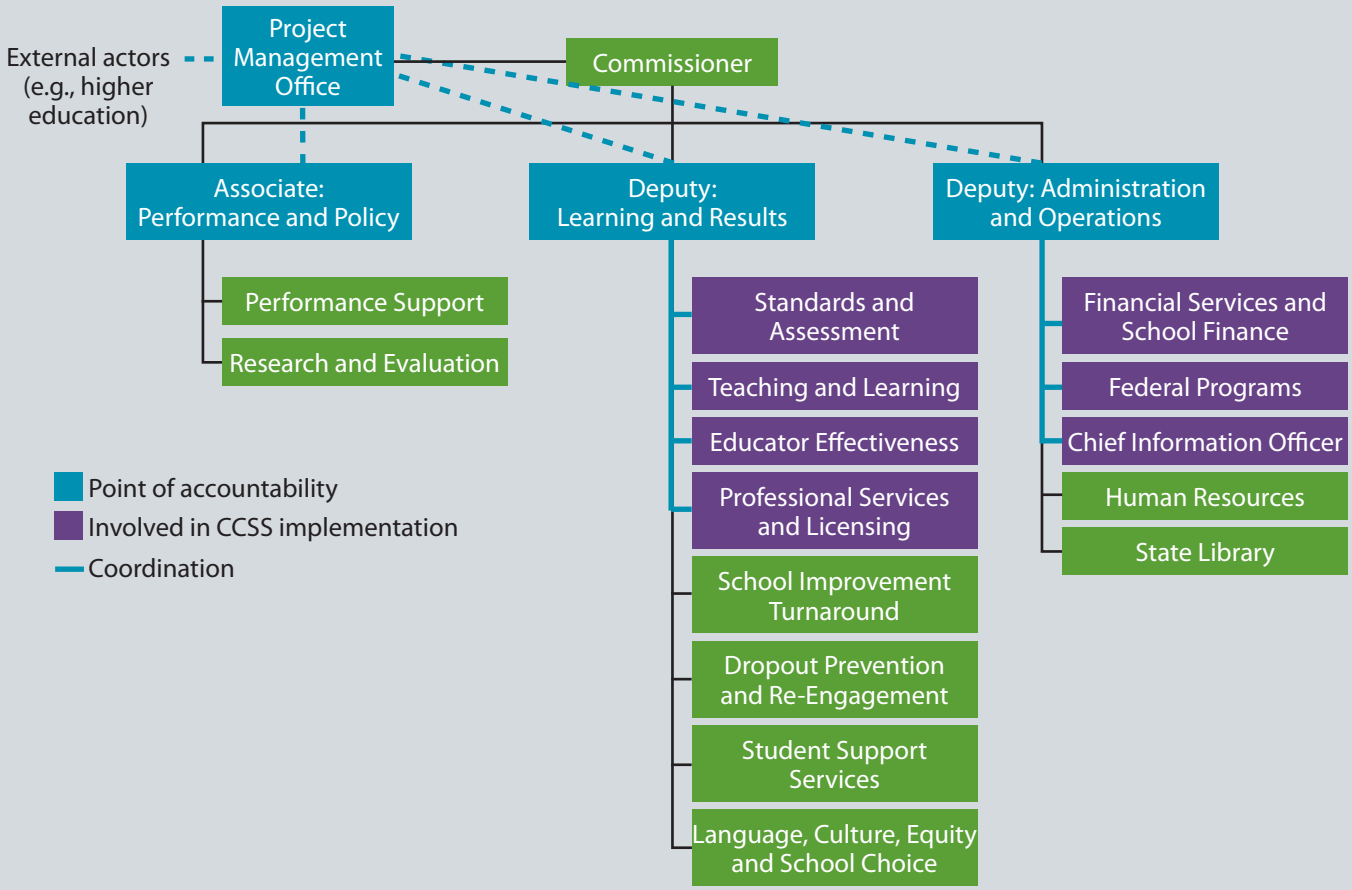
Deputy Commissioner (EXAMPLE)



2. **Create a project management office (PMO).** Designate a person or team of people with the right skills to drive implementation by applying the right set of tools for planning and problem-solving. In this case, direct leadership of project work will sit in the various units in the agency; the PMO will play a coordinating and monitoring role. Systems that already have PMOs could potentially fold this work into their existing efforts. PMO staff members need not be senior, but they must be skilled at working with and coordinating more senior counterparts. Thus, they will need strong problem-solving skills, interpersonal and relationship management skills, and "run room" from the senior team to coordinate the work. This approach is less disruptive to existing lines of hierarchy in the organization. To make the approach work, system leaders need to be able to rely on a strong leadership team that can work well together and will be willing to respect the role that the PMO plays. They will also need to find the right person to lead the PMO.

   Systems that already have *delivery units* may adopt either approach and integrate it with their existing delivery efforts. In the case of a single point of accountability, that person will become the delivery unit's primary point of contact. In the case of a PMO, the delivery unit will play a parallel role, managing toward overall outcomes even as the PMO is tracking deliverables and milestones. ***You can learn more about the role of a delivery unit here.***

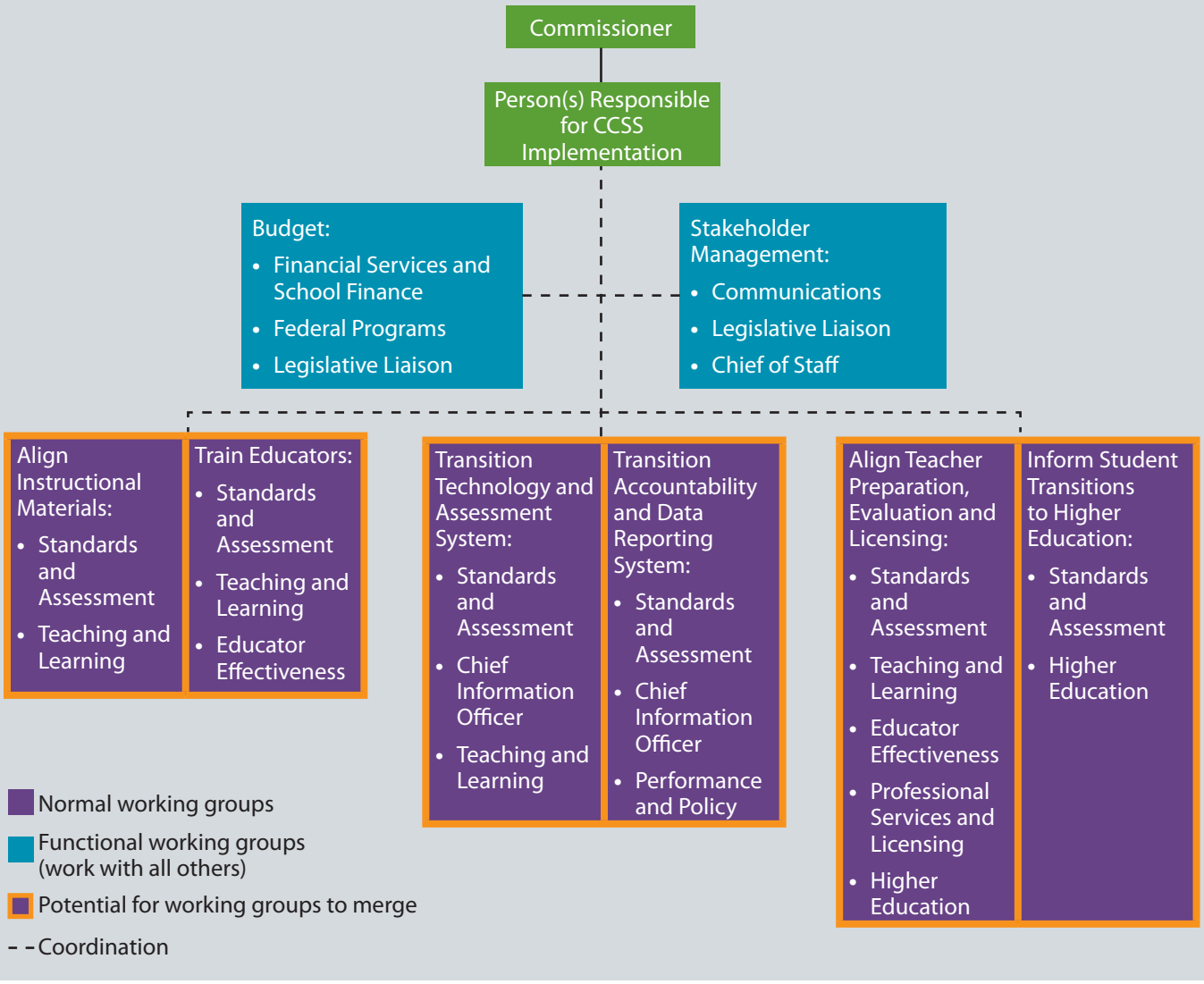
Project Management Office (EXAMPLE)



Even with leadership defined, staff members throughout the system will need to coordinate their efforts in a way that gets beyond the department's organization chart. To break down silos, it is advisable to create some type of working group structure that brings the relevant leaders together around the major areas of work. Different tasks will require the various divisions in your agency to combine their efforts — often with the efforts of external partners like higher education institutions — in different ways. For example, a working group around the transition of a technology and assessment system might include representatives from standards and assessment, the chief information officer, the teaching and learning division of a state education agency, and district and vendor partners. And any working group will need to draw on your agency's budget, finance and communications divisions to ensure that it is using resources and managing stakeholders effectively.

Whatever form your strategic implementation team takes, it will interact primarily with these working groups. An example of a working group structure is given in the figure on the next page.

Working Group Structure (EXAMPLE)



CASE STORY: KENTUCKY

The Kentucky Board of Education, the Council on Postsecondary Education and the Education Professional Standards Board signed a resolution directing their respective agencies to implement the CCSS in English language arts and mathematics. This resolution formalizes the state's agreement to integrate standards into its K–12 curriculum, teacher preparation programs and other higher education activities. Details on the resolution can be found ***here***.

Set Assessment Implementation Timeline

Budget and timeline considerations influence how your state rolls out the transition to the CCSS. The implementation timeline can be staggered by year, content area, pilot districts or cohort (e.g., bringing the CCSS first to the youngest grade in elementary, middle and high schools).

To help you navigate amongst these choices, a **sample** timeline is provided for how to move toward the CCSS. Each state and district will obviously need to customize the implementation effort. For example, a state or district may develop a plan based on the results of its gap analysis and grab the "low-hanging fruit" in grades in which the CCSS are most similar to the state's former standards. The sample timeline simply provides an important reference point as you set your own timeline for this effort.

Though the timeline is fictitious, it is designed to inform your thinking around timing interdependencies across various streams of work, the flow of information and feedback to monitor progress, and the capacity lift that will be required to implement new standards and assessments. Leaders from across the state education agency may well be implicated in this endeavor, which touches many different areas of work; engaging in this process will help identify where those connections exist to strengthen communication and collaboration among leaders and managers responsible for moving the work forward on a daily basis. It will also highlight opportunities to improve efficiencies across the agency; increase the coherence of the effort; and wherever possible, break down silos between agencies responsible for carrying out the various streams of work.

The following assumptions were made in constructing the timelines:

- **The state has conducted a valid and reliable comparison between its former K–12 standards in English language arts and math and the new CCSS.** Additionally, it is assumed that the state has identified the gaps between the two sets of standards, new content and performance expectations, and changes in grade-level content and noted what content is no longer included.
- **State and district roles overlap, ownership of components is shared, and horizontal and vertical collaborations will occur.** States will employ different approaches in how/who leads particular components/stages of the work and when districts assume more responsibility. States should identify high-capacity districts capable of piloting efforts in front of statewide implementation.
- Though **implementation may be staggered by grade/grade band depending on state/district needs and capacity,** the following timeline was used for purposes of this exercise:
  - MeasuredState: CCSS K–2 (2011–12); CCSS 3–5 (2012–13); CCSS 6–8 (2013–14); and CCSS 9–12 (2014–15); all transition support (professional development, assessment rollout, etc.) occurs for all grades simultaneously.
- **The state has established state-, regional-, district-, school- and classroom-level processes** around adoption and implementation of new curricula and instructional materials. The same assumption holds for professional development.
- English language arts and math content areas **follow the same implementation timeline.**
- Adjustments to the accountability/reporting timeline will be made **contingent upon reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or approved waiver request.**
- **Critical anchor milestones have been identified in ORANGE** and can be used by the chief, deputy or other senior leader to manage the overall flow of work.

MeasuredState: 2014 Implementation Timeline for CCSS/PARCC (EXAMPLE)

	Spring 2011	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Winter 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Fall 2014
Organize to implement															
Conduct gap analysis on new vs. existing standards *(assumed done already)*															
Form an internal leadership team (the strategic implementation team) to determine timeline, assign responsibility and establish process to monitor progress	■														
Set instructional/assessment implementation timeline	■														
Conduct self-assessment/audit of resource allocation	■														
Set budget	■														
Build a base of support by establishing the "guiding coalition": Develop a list of the partners most important to making teachers aware of the new CCSS	■	■													
Build a base of support by establishing the guiding coalition: Identify new/existing channels to leverage for curriculum, professional development and communications needs	■	■													
Identify critical audiences and key messages in communications plan				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Create messages/materials/social media/events tailored to different audiences with a focus on classroom teachers				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Create a plan and timeline for executing communications strategies and seeking stakeholder input and feedback, including surveys, sample audits, focus groups, listening tours by state leaders				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Communicate the delivery message and widen the circles of leadership: Disseminate materials/information (state board of education, governor, state legislature, higher education, education organizations, professional development network leaders, district curriculum leaders, career technical centers, teachers, regional/district leadership teams and charter schools)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Communicate the delivery message and widen the circles of the leadership: Develop/refine stakeholder engagement strategy around the CCSS and related assessment implementation	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Align curricular and instructional materials (may be **state-led, district-led** or a **hybrid,** whereby the state leverages high-capacity districts' efforts in front of statewide implementation)															
Make publicly available the results of a secondary review/ validation of standards gap analysis, including the differences in topic, content AND cognitive demand	■														
Develop a process for review of textbook and instructional materials	■	■													
Compare alignment of existing state-developed instructional materials/performance tasks to the CCSS		■	■	■	■										

■ Critical milestone

	Spring 2011	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Winter 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Fall 2014
Develop model aligned instructional materials (e.g., frameworks, units, performance tasks) coordinating/building on PARCC Model Content Frameworks and PARCC prototypes															
Convene group of stakeholders (e.g., educators, higher education, state education agency staff) to provide feedback on PARCC Model Content Frameworks to inform summer 2012 refinements															
Review state/district textbook and instructional materials procurement policies and ensure adoption timeline necessitates that materials align with CCSS implementation timeline															
Examine course specifications — particularly at the high school level — to ensure they align with the new CCSS															
Examine state graduation requirements policies in collaboration with higher education and technical college staff to ensure alignment with the new CCSS; it takes, on average, five to six years for changes in state graduation requirements to take effect. This might begin with an inventory of district requirements.															
Review/implement PARCC model 12th grade bridge courses aligned to the CCSS															
Develop a plan for integrating the CCSS literacy standards into the state science and social studies standards (crosswalk literacy standards with state science/social studies standards, identify next revision cycle, etc.)															
Teach the CCSS in the classroom			K–2				3–5				6–8				9–12
Identify metrics for success and establish feedback loops to monitor whether instructional practice changes															
Establish routines to track progress of the quality and use of classroom materials															
Train educators and school leaders (may be **state-led, district-led** or a **hybrid,** whereby the state leverages high-capacity districts' efforts in front of statewide implementation) Note: These include time-release to attend professional development and time to share/reflect in teams back in the building.															
Develop a coordinated agencywide plan and calendar for professional development (PD)															
Conduct awareness sessions to make teachers/principals comfortable with the CCSS															
Models and exemplars of quality, aligned PD are defined, required, provided or certified for teachers and principals															
PD to unpack standards to ensure deep understanding of content and performance expectations															
PD for teachers with new/different content responsibilities															
PD for teachers on instructional strategies															
PD for principals focused on instructional leadership															

	Spring 2011	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Winter 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Fall 2014
PD on use of observation rubrics in teacher evaluation and other formative teacher assessment tools to inform ongoing professional coaching of teachers				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
PD for teachers on PARCC assessment system, item types and data interpretation						■	■	■	■	■					
PD for regional/district and school staff to use online assessments and development/support for technology-enabled tools that help building-level staff assess specific gaps in student mastery of the CCSS (e.g., data dashboards)				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
PD for teachers on literacy standards in science, social studies and technology						■	■	■	■	■	■				
PD for regional/district and school staff on using rubrics to ascertain quality of curriculum and instructional tools					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Select PARCC Educator Leader Cadre participants and integrate into larger PD plan					■	■									
If Race to the Top awardee, crosswalk and coordinate local education agency scopes of work with state PD plans					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Transition assessment system															
Develop an assessment transition plan	■	■	■	■	■	■									
Conduct an analysis of the current state assessment blueprint/test specifications against the new CCSS to identify changes in topic placement and cognitive demand and to determine the significance of changes required to accommodate the new standards (including alternative assessments)	■	■													
Align formative tools/assessments to CCSS content to avoid measuring outdated content or expectations	■	■													
Create, disseminate and collect formative assessment mapping tools for district- and school-level inventory					■	■	■	■							
Determine state/district/school role in vetting formative assessment tools					■	■	■	■							
Review existing items for alignment with regard to grade level and cognitive demand		■	■												
Convene Technical Advisory Committee to present findings and determine if a transition test is plausible and appropriate. If appropriate, offer assessment guidance to signal changes on state assessment between now and 2014.		■	■	■	■										
Develop a notification strategy to alert all districts, schools and communities about: • Year of implementation (notification should occur at least 12 months prior to the operational assessment) • Changes to the assessment structure If possible, release items indicative of the new assessment				■	■	■									

	Spring 2011	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Winter 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Fall 2014
The following assessment transition tasks may not be applicable and are dependent upon a state's decision to change its current state assessments in English language arts and math prior to the implementation of the common assessments.															
Review the possible new assessment to ensure all federal regulations regarding peer review and approval are appropriate or if new approval will be needed															
Review current assessment contracts and overall fiscal resources to determine the fiscal and practical impact, especially if additional field testing or new standard setting is required															
Ensure internal leadership fully understands the implications of changes in assessment															
Convene a team of district assessment directors to discuss district and school impact of a change in the assessment at this stage															
Determine state policy around PARCC-developed optional diagnostic and mid-year assessments and communicate to districts and schools															
Pilot participation in PARCC															
Fully participate in PARCC statewide															
Transition technology to support accountability and reporting system															
Develop/refine data governance structure to ensure the necessary flow of data															
Review/revise state/district/higher education data system budgets to prioritize funding the maintenance and growth of a sustainable P–20 data system															
Build/revise user-friendly data dashboards that allow good public reporting of critical college and career readiness indicators															
Build/revise high school feedback reports to reflect PARCC/ college and career readiness indicators															
Build/revise state instructional management systems to encourage sharing of classroom materials and best practices															
Identify teacher/school evaluation metrics (growth measures, observations, etc.)															
Review/revise state accountability system, including any state formula or index, to reflect approaching, meeting and exceeding college and career readiness indicators and PARCC assessments															
Consider implications of CCSS/assessments on current statewide accountability systems															
Develop process to engage appropriate leaders in considering resetting targets and trajectories in preparation for the transition to new PARCC assessments															
As needed, crosswalk Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver requests/approvals with state and district workplans															

Critical milestone

	Spring 2011	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Winter 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Fall 2014
Transition technology to support assessment system															
Conduct a self-audit, identifying how/if district, state and higher education data systems interact and the technology infrastructure needs to support transition to PARCC	■	■	■												
Establish a definition of technology readiness for districts and schools	■	■	■	■	■	■									
Evaluate school technology and infrastructure readiness using PARCC/Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Technology Readiness Tool (including bandwidth, hardware and software licenses)					■		■		■		■		■		
Develop/refine data governance structure to ensure the necessary flow of data	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Develop plan to migrate other activities to online platform to prepare for new interface							■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Build and implement strategies to close technology infrastructure gaps to prepare for computer-based assessments			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Develop an early warning system based on the PARCC assessment to identify students in need of additional support to get on track before graduation							■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Align teacher preparation, evaluation and licensing (involve higher education and business stakeholders to ensure alignment of these systems to K–12)															
Investigate implications of the CCSS on current teacher licensure/relicensure policies	■	■													
Integrate teacher evaluation into preservice training for teachers and principals	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Align teacher and principal observation measures and formative assessment tools with the CCSS					■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Engage higher education faculty (both arts and sciences and teacher educators) to build a full understanding of the new CCSS	■	■	■	■	■	■									
Develop a plan for higher education faculty around in-service teacher training	■	■	■	■	■	■									
Revise teacher in-service and preservice preparation programs and alternative certification programs to align to content/ pedagogy of the CCSS	■	■	■	■	■										
Inform student transitions to higher education (involve higher education and business stakeholders to ensure alignment of these systems to K–12)															
Align undergraduate entry-level, credit-bearing courses to the CCSS		■	■	■	■										
Align/redesign developmental education programs to develop students' knowledge and skills to the level specified in the CCSS					■	■	■	■							
Align developmental courses/modules and undergraduate entry-level, first-year, credit-bearing courses					■	■	■	■							
Examine two- and four-year public college and university and college placement requirement policies into entry-level, credit-bearing courses to ensure they align with the new CCSS	■	■	■	■	■										

	Spring 2011	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Winter 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Winter 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013	Fall 2013	Winter 2013	Spring 2014	Summer 2014	Fall 2014
Monitor and sustain progress (applies to all aspects of implementation above)															
Establish quality control/feedback loop structure to evaluate the impact of transition activities	■														
Identify metrics for success	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Monitor progress using one or more internal routines and establish process to prioritize and solve CCSS implementation-related problems	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Complete annual review of implementation progress with state policymakers to ensure on track to meet goals		■		■		■		■		■		■		■	

Set the Budget

The goal of the CCSS is to improve a state's core instructional programs to prepare students to meet increasingly rigorous expectations; as such, implementation efforts should be supported primarily with state and local revenue. Federal education grant funds can provide supplemental support to help states, districts and schools leverage reforms, but each federal funding source has its own rules that govern how the grant may be used. The steps below provide a framework to help states and districts determine whether federal funds can be used for a particular cost. This list is not exhaustive. Staff should always consult the specific program statutes, regulations and guidance to determine what additional rules apply. Including the chief financial officers and experts in Title I or other federal programs in all planning discussions for CCSS implementation is an important first step.

Step 1: Identify the specific costs that need to be supported.

The first step in developing a budget is to determine what specific activities, services, supplies, materials and personnel costs need to be funded to implement the CCSS and related assessments. Using federal funds to support some activities may be possible, but evaluating whether federal funds can support a state's or district's implementation efforts is impossible without first identifying the specific costs the state or district wants to fund.

For example, states and districts may wish to provide training about the CCSS and related assessments to instructional staff. Several federal funding sources support professional development, but each grant has its own restrictions for what kinds of professional development activities are permissible.

Note: The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) will bear many of the development costs associated with updating the state testing system on a discrete, one-time-only basis.

Step 2: Make an initial determination of which federal funding sources might be able to support the proposed cost.

The next step is to determine which federal funding sources might be available to support the identified cost. Federal education funding streams are designed for specific purposes and can support only certain types of activities (a brief summary of the major federal funding streams can be found on the following pages). Once the most relevant potential federal funding sources are identified, Steps 3–7 can assist states and districts in further analyzing whether a specific cost is permissible.

For example, a district seeking to launch professional development for teachers in how to use the CCSS and related assessments to improve student achievement in Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring would typically focus on the School Improvement Grant, Title I and Title II. Unless the professional development specifically targets students with disabilities or English language learners, drawing funds from Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grants or Title III is not prudent or legal.

Step 3: Determine whether there are any fiscal restrictions, such as the "supplement not supplant" requirement, that bar the proposed cost.

Most federal education programs have fiscal requirements designed to ensure federal funds are spent on *extra* costs a state or district would not normally support with state or local funds. The most common of these requirements is the supplement not supplant rule. While applying the supplement not supplant test is very fact specific and varies from program to program, in general, costs are *not* considered extra when they:

- Are required by state, local or federal law;
- Were previously supported with state or local funds; or
- Benefit all students, not just the specific target population of a given grant (this is mostly relevant for the Title I and migrant programs).

Given this, identify which of the costs from Step 1 are extra costs the state or district would not normally pay for; these extra costs are typically the ones that may be eligible for federal support. For example, if a state legislature mandates that districts carry out specific types of professional development activities as part of the CCSS implementation effort, districts generally may not support those professional development activities with federal funds that contain a supplement not supplant requirement.

Note: Schools that operate Title I schoolwide programs, explained in more detail ***here***, may have more flexibility in defining what is considered extra at the school level. As a practical matter, however, there is considerable confusion among auditors and monitors about how to apply the supplement not supplant requirement to costs at the school level; thus, schoolwide program schools must exercise caution when developing their budgets.

Step 4: Determine who will benefit from the cost.

If a proposed cost is generally consistent with the purpose of a federal program (Step 2) and does not violate the supplement not supplant requirement that applies to most federal education programs (Step 3), the next step is to determine who will benefit from the proposed costs, such as who will participate in the planned activities, whose salaries will be paid, who will use the materials purchased, etc. Each federal education grant has its own eligibility criteria defining the target population that can be served. Costs may support only eligible beneficiaries. For example, if a school district purchases supplemental instructional materials aligned to the CCSS with IDEA, Part B funds to provide extra support to students with disabilities, the district must ensure the materials are used *exclusively* for IDEA-eligible students.

Step 5: Consider applicable "use of funds" requirements, including mandatory caps and set-asides.

Next, determine whether the proposed costs are consistent with a program's use of funds requirements. Many federal education programs have a statutory use of funds section that outlines the types of costs that can be charged to the program. Some programs, such as Title I and IDEA, do not have a specific use of funds section, in which case the proposed costs must clearly align to the program's purpose. In addition to the statute and regulations, the U.S. Department of Education develops nonregulatory guidance for certain programs that contains more information about the use of funds.

States and districts should also take into account any statutory caps that limit the amount that may be spent on specific types of costs, as well as set-asides that require funds to be spent on specific activities.

Practical Tip: Many federal education programs require districts (and, in some cases, states) to set aside funds to support activities for eligible private school students, staff and parents. How a district uses federal funds for its public schools can, in some cases, affect what it must set aside for private schools.

In addition to federal use of funds requirements, states and districts must also take into account state-imposed rules that affect federal grant programs. Most of the major federal education programs, such as Title I and IDEA, are state-administered programs, meaning the state is responsible for overseeing program implementation throughout the state. As a result, states are given latitude to impose additional rules governing how federal funds may be spent. Districts are legally required to comply with these state-imposed rules as well.

States that wish to encourage their districts to use federal funds for CCSS implementation activities might consider ways they can support district efforts, such as minimizing state-imposed barriers and developing guidance informing districts how they can use federal funds for specific activities.

Step 6: Identify why the proposed cost is "necessary and reasonable" for the success of the federal program supporting the cost.

Consider how the proposed cost will further the goals and objectives of the federal program(s) that might be used to support the cost. All costs charged to federal funds must, among other things, be necessary for the performance or administration of the relevant federal program(s). They must also be reasonable in light of the amount of money to be spent and the needs of the entity spending the funds.

Practical Tip: States and districts must be able to demonstrate that all costs charged to federal funds benefit the program(s) that support the costs. As states and districts develop their budgets, they should think ahead about the systems they will rely on and the strategies they will use to document their activities.

For example, a state or district using federal funds to support an implementation cost should be prepared to demonstrate how the activity furthers the goals of the applicable federal grant program; that the amount paid reflects a fair market value; and that the state or district followed all applicable state and local laws, policies and procedures when paying for the activity (e.g., procurement rules, inventory rules, payroll and human resources rules).

Step 7: Review state rules, grant applications and program plans.

The last step is to ensure the proposed cost is consistent with any application, program plan or other planning tool the state, district or school submitted to receive the funds. All costs charged to federal funds must be consistent with these plans. States typically submit plans and applications to the U.S. Department of Education. For example, states submitted a document known as the "Consolidated Application" for major Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs in 2002, along with additional information, including accountability workbooks, in subsequent years as part of that process. Similarly, states were required to submit a detailed application for School Improvement Grant funds under section 1003(g) and for Race to the Top funds.

In state-administered programs, districts submit plans and applications to their state, and the state is responsible for designing the applications that districts use to apply for funds. Depending on the timing and the application process involved, states or districts might need to amend their applications to use federal funds if the cost is not contemplated by the initial application.

Overview of Major Federal Education Programs

The following summaries provide a brief overview of certain federal education programs that may be relevant to CCSS implementation efforts. A state, district or school must take a range of issues into account before using any of these funding sources for a particular cost. These overviews are designed only to help identify potential sources of funding for proposed activities. Because federal funds often have different requirements for how funds can be used at the state, district and, in some cases, school levels, these summaries provide brief information about the permissible uses of funds at each level.

Title I, School Improvement, Section 1003(a)

Purpose: To improve student achievement in Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring to enable those schools to make adequate yearly progress and exit improvement status.

Major uses of funds include salaries, professional development, materials and other costs related to school improvement initiatives.

State	State education agencies (SEAs) must reserve 4 percent of their Title I, Part A allocation for school improvement activities. Of this amount, they may retain 5 percent to carry out their responsibilities for school improvement under **section 1116** and the statewide system of support under **section 1117**.
District	Local education agencies (LEAs) may use their funds for school improvement activities consistent with **section 1116** in schools identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring.
School	LEAs are not required to allocate funds to schools but may choose to in order to support school-level school improvement activities.

Section 1003(a) funds are not technically governed by a supplement not supplant provision; however, other rules require Title I funds — including section 1003(a) funds — be used for extra costs. ***See Q&A F-4 of the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance on School Improvement Grants.***

Title I, School Improvement Grant, Section 1003(g)

Purpose: In conjunction with funds reserved under section 1003(a), to improve student achievement in Title I schools and Title I-eligible schools identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring to enable those schools to make adequate yearly progress and exit improvement status.

Major uses of funds include costs related to implementing the school turnaround initiatives described in the state and local applications, consistent with the approved budgets.

State	SEAs may reserve up to 5 percent of the grant for administration, evaluation and technical assistance expenses.
District	LEAs must use funds to implement one of four school intervention models in eligible schools in accordance with the LEA's application approved by the SEA.
School	Funds earmarked for school-level costs must be spent consistently to implement the selected school intervention model in accordance with the LEA's application approved by the SEA.

Please note, section 1003(g) funds are not technically governed by a supplement not supplant provision; however, other rules require Title I funds — including section 1003(g) funds — be used for extra costs. ***See Q&A F-4 of the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance on School Improvement Grants.***

Title I, Part A

Purpose: To ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.

Title I, Part A does not have a specific use of funds section describing the allowable use of Title I, Part A funds. However, Title I does have a ***statement of purpose***. Because Part A falls under Title I, funds spent on Part A programs must adhere to the purposes of Title I. Major uses of funds include salaries, professional development activities for Title I staff, instructional materials and supplies, and activities designed to help improve student academic achievement.

State	SEAs may reserve up to 1 percent of the Title I, Part A grant for state administration. As a practical matter, most states require the full amount of this set-aside for implementing the oversight responsibilities of the Title I program.
District	LEAs may, and in some cases must, reserve funds for **specific district-level activities.** In particular, LEAs may reserve funds for districtwide initiatives that benefit eligible students and are consistent with the purposes of Title I.
School	Schools that receive Title I must operate one of two program models. • A school that is eligible to operate a **schoolwide program** may spend funds on educational costs consistent with the school's needs identified through a needs assessment and articulated in a schoolwide plan. • Schools that are not eligible to operate a schoolwide program, or that choose not to, must operate a targeted assistance program. Such schools must use Title I funds to target specifically identified students.

Title I, Part A contains a ***supplement not supplant*** provision; at the school level, a different test applies to schools with schoolwide programs, which may provide for more flexibility in certain circumstances. For more information about this rule, please see the ***U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance on Title I Fiscal Issues***.

Title II, Part A (Improving Teacher Quality)

Purpose: To increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools and to hold LEAs and schools accountable for improvements in student academic achievement.

Major uses of funds include professional development activities, activities to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, and class size reduction.

State	SEAs may reserve up to 2.5 percent of the Title II, Part A allocation for a variety of state-level activities set out in **section 2113(c),** including professional development for teachers and principals in the state, helping LEAs create professional development programs, and supporting activities to ensure that teachers use state standards and assessments to improve instructional practices and academic achievement. Please note: State-level Title II, Part A funds are subject to **equitable services** requirements for private schools. As a result, each SEA must use a portion of the funds it reserves for state-level activities to provide equitable services to private school teachers, principals and other staff.
District	LEAs must conduct a needs assessment to determine the needs of the LEA's teaching force to be able to have all students meet state standards. The LEA must spend Title II, Part A funds, consistent with the results of the needs assessment, on activities set out in **section 2123,** including certain kinds of professional development activities to improve instructional practices and academic achievement.
School	LEAs are not required to allocate Title II, Part A funds to schools. If an LEA chooses to, the school must spend the funds consistent with section 2113, unless the allocation is used to support a schoolwide program, in which case the funds must be used consistent with the schoolwide plan.

Title II, Part A contains a supplement not supplant provision at both the ***state*** and ***local*** levels.

Title II, Part B (Math and Science Partnerships)

Purpose: To improve the academic achievement of students in the areas of mathematics and science.

Major uses of funds include professional development for math and science teachers, instruction on the use of data and assessments to improve classroom practices, and developing more rigorous math and science curricula, consistent with the partnership's approved application and budget.

State	SEAs may reserve a limited amount of funds that are necessary and reasonable for administering the Math and Science Partnership program.
Partnership*	Partnerships may spend funds consistent with their approved application on authorized activities in **section 2202.** If set out in the approved application or an appropriate amendment, these activities may include developing or redesigning more rigorous mathematics and science curricula as well as professional development activities for math and science teachers.

*States must fund eligible partnerships made up of a high-needs LEA and an engineering, mathematics or science department of an institution of higher education. The partnership may include other organizations identified by ***statute***.

Title II, Part B contains a ***supplement not supplant*** provision.

Title III, Part A (English Language Acquisition)

Purpose: To help ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English and meet the same state standards all children are expected to meet.

Major uses of funds include professional development for eligible teachers and supplemental materials for eligible students.

State	SEAs may reserve up to 5 percent of the Title III, Part A allocation for a variety of state-level activities set out in **section 3111**, including professional development activities and other activities that assist personnel in meeting state and local certification and licensing requirements for teaching limited English proficient children. Please note: State-level Title III, Part A funds are subject to **equitable services** requirements for private schools. As a result, each SEA must use a portion of the funds it reserves for state-level activities to provide equitable services to private schools.
District	LEAs must use district-level funds for the mandatory activities set out in **section 3115(c),** including specific kinds of professional development activities to improve language instruction programs. After carrying out the mandatory activities, LEAs may use their funds for the activities set out in **section 3115(d).**
School	LEAs are not required to allocate Title III, Part A funds to schools. If an LEA chooses to, the school must spend the funds consistent with section 2113, unless the allocation is used to support a schoolwide program, in which case the funds must be used consistent with the schoolwide plan.

Title III, Part A contains a ***supplement not supplant*** provision. For more information about this rule, please see the ***U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance on Supplement Not Supplant Provision of Title III of the ESEA***.

IDEA, Part B (Special Education Grants)

Purpose: To ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living.

Major uses of funds include salaries, professional development activities for special education staff, child find and evaluation activities, supplemental instructional materials and supplies, and permissible assistive technology.

State	Consistent with their state plans, SEAs may spend the funds reserved for state-level activities on a variety of costs set out in **section 611(e).** SEAs must carry out the monitoring, enforcement, complaint investigation and mediation activities specified in section 611(e)(2)(B) and then may carry out other authorized activities, including professional development.
District	IDEA, Part B does not have a specific use of funds section describing the allowable use of district-level funds. Consistent with their local plans, LEAs must spend their IDEA, Part B funds for the excess cost of providing special education and related services to eligible children.
School	LEAs are not required to allocate IDEA, Part B funds to schools. If an LEA chooses to make the allocation, the school must spend the funds consistent with the purpose of Part B, unless the allocation is used to support a schoolwide program, in which case the funds must be used consistent with the schoolwide plan.

IDEA, Part B contains a ***supplement not supplant*** provision, although ***some state-level funds are exempt***. For more information about this rule, please see ***Q&A C-6 in the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance on Funds for Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Made Available Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009***.

Race to the Top

Purpose: To encourage and reward states that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers; and implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas.

Major uses of funds include educational costs to implement the initiatives articulated in the approved application and budget.

State	SEAs must spend funds reserved for state-level activities consistent with the approved scope of work submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.
District	LEAs must spend funds for district-level activities consistent with the approved scope of work submitted to the state.
School	LEAs may serve schools consistent with the approved scope of work submitted to the state.

Race to the Top does not contain a supplement not supplant provision.

Complete the Gap Analysis

You will want to identify the degree to which your state's current content standards compare with those in the CCSS, as the findings hold obvious implications for curriculum, instruction, assessments and teacher professional development. This activity is best coordinated at the state level and shared with all districts and schools. Most states in PARCC have completed this analysis using Achieve's Common Core Comparison Tool (CCCTool).[2] Those states that have not yet done so can access the CCCTool at ***http://ccctool.achieve.org***. The CCCTool provides information — by grade level as well as overall — about what it will take for states to move from their current standards-based systems to full implementation of the CCSS. The CCCTool allows a user first to match one or more state standards to a CCSS and then to rate the strength of the match.

First, though, be sure to closely read the standards themselves. Without doing so, you may miss key, but often subtle, features of the CCSS. For example, a close reading of the mathematics standards will show coherence across grades, coherence within grades, and connections between the content standards and practice standards. The CCSS provide a critical opportunity to help students see mathematics as a connected and interdependent discipline. Now, states and districts are prepared to conduct a gap analysis, the results of which will inform where to funnel resources to support student learning.

While analyzing the gap between current and future standards, be sure to also discuss the changing requirements in cognitive demand. Teachers and curriculum and assessment directors need to not just know about changes in topics within the CCSS but also understand the new requirements for student performance. For instance, 4th grade students have traditionally had to recognize and generate equivalent fractions. In the CCSS, 4th grade students must now use visual fraction models. This task requires a deeper level of understanding and should lead teachers to adapt their instruction and frequently test for understanding via formative assessment. Improve students' preparation for the future rigors required in the CCSS by discussing the actual implications within instruction or assessment using Webb's Depth of Knowledge or Bloom's new verbs. Again, the CCCTool also allows states to determine the cognitive demand rating using a three-point rating system.

Even those states that completed a gap analysis before deciding to adopt the CCSS should consider doing so again. After all, a gap analysis for implementation should show which standards are new, which occur sooner and which

occur later, all of which provide critical data to make decisions on resource allocation, instructional materials and professional development. Reviewing the summary findings from the mathematics and English language arts gap analyses in ***Arizona***, ***Connecticut*** and ***Oregon*** may also prove instructive. Finally, you should discuss the following questions:

Discussion Questions

- Which of the concepts and skills required in the CCSS are included in your state's standards?
- How strong is the match between the two sets of standards with regard to topics by grade and the cognitive demand of each topic?
- Which of the concepts and skills required in the CCSS are not included in the state's standards?
- How similar are the CCSS and state standards with respect to the grade levels at which concepts and skills are taught? At what grade levels do state expectations address concepts and skills earlier or later than the CCSS?
- How similar are the CCSS and the state standards with respect to the cognitive demand expectations that are included in specific strands (English language arts) and domains (mathematics)? In what strands and domains are the differences greatest?
- Which concepts and skills required in your state's standards are not included in the CCSS?
- What are the implications for your curricula, materials and professional development strategy?

CASE STORY: WASHINGTON STATE

Recent legislation in Washington state allows the superintendent of public instruction to provisionally adopt the CCSS. In the legislation, the superintendent was asked to submit a report by January 2011 that compares the new CCSS to the state's current standards, identifies the transition timeline, and estimates the cost to both the state and school districts. Taking the time to analyze this gap has informed the rest of the implementation effort in the state. The full report can be found ***here***.

Conclusion

The five building blocks covered in this chapter have set the stage for your CCSS implementation effort. With the right aspiration, the appropriate people on board, an adequate budget and a high-level timeline for implementation, you will be well positioned to manage the transition. Even if you are well into implementation, stepping back and ensuring these conditions are in place will aid your effort. Next, you will want to form a communications plan to ensure that others beyond your strategic implementation team support the aims of your CCSS implementation effort.

ENDNOTES

1 Delaware Department of Education (October 2010). *Delaware Education Plan Overview.*

2 The CCCTool is secure: States enter a user name and password provided by Achieve in each content area. Each state can designate specific staff within the department of education as being responsible for distributing the passwords. Once a state receives its passwords, Achieve will no longer distribute them but will refer all inquiries to the designated "password keeper" in the state. For information on how your state can receive a password or to determine your state's password keeper, go to ***www.achieve.org/contact_us***.

NOTES

4. ORGANIZE TO IMPLEMENT

Getting the Message Out

Part of **IMPLEMENTING Common Core State Standards and Assessments**

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

To download the full workbook, go to www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook

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IN THIS SECTION

4. Organize To Implement: Getting the Message Out

Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- Is there a group of key people outside the state education agency or school district who are actively committed to the success of the implementation effort? Is this group organized to influence key groups in the delivery system? How strong is its influence?
- Does the state education agency or school district regularly communicate with key stakeholders about the overall goal as well as the implementation of the goal? Is there a compelling message tied to different stakeholders?

One risk faced by any change effort is "undercommunicating by a factor of 10, or even 100."[1] The communications effort should receive the same amount of attention as the implementation effort. Often the best communications strategy is simply having a clear and easily articulated implementation strategy that provides transparency and ensures open dialogue with critical stakeholders. Communications will never be effective if simply tacked on to the end of your implementation strategy; you need to communicate and engage with key stakeholders early, often and throughout to build the necessary statewide support for these major reform efforts.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) raise expectations for student performance. Maintaining popular support for this effort is essential. A **guiding coalition,** consisting of 7–10 key external stakeholders, can help. Beyond this small group, you must also have a plan for **communicating** the message to the field, to parents, to students and to the public at large, who should all know what to expect and why. School leaders, for example, need to understand the effort's aspiration, the path to successful implementation, and how related policies such as school accountability and teacher education will be affected. Likewise, teachers of English language arts and mathematics need to adjust the scope and sequence of what they teach. In essence, communications efforts help widen the circles of leadership beyond your department so that the transition to the CCSS has the support it needs.

Build a Base of Support by Establishing the "Guiding Coalition"

Flagging public support can push implementation off the rails. Pressure to water down student expectations may build, for example, once new assessment results show that students are not as prepared as once believed. Inevitably, state and district leaders need help in keeping rigorous expectations for students at the heart of their agenda. Though the strategic implementation team plays a key role in supporting this agenda, a small group of highly visible and credible leaders are needed to sustain effort in the face of pushback.

The role of this "guiding coalition" is to remove bureaucratic barriers to change, exert influence at key moments to support implementation and offer counsel to the strategic implementation team. The guiding coalition might include a head of a university, key businessperson, state legislator, leader of a professional content association, teachers union leader or vocal parent. ***You can learn more about establishing a guiding coalition here.***

CASE STORY: TENNESSEE

Leaders in Tennessee knew they needed to mobilize core support from across government, business and the political sphere to successfully compete for federal Race to the Top funds. The mission of Tennessee SCORE, a nonpartisan organization chaired by former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, is to encourage sound policy decisions in public education. Tennessee SCORE has played an important role in helping form and coordinate the state's guiding coalition. The results are impressive. State leaders have consistently supported a set reform agenda. In fact, all seven 2010 gubernatorial candidates signed on to support the state's Race to the Top proposal. More recently, the group launched a campaign called "Expect More, Achieve More" in support of the state's new, higher academic standards. The work of SCORE offers a compelling lesson about how to build support for education reform efforts by partnering with an intermediary organization.

EXERCISE: BUILD THE GUIDING COALITION

Purpose: To identify a guiding coalition, determine how you will build trust and alignment among its members, and prepare for opportunities that exist for the group to reinforce the importance of this implementation project to your state.

Who should participate? The strategic implementation team should complete this exercise, with the input of the system leader.

Directions:

1. Brainstorm possible members of the guiding coalition.
2. Narrow the list by excluding those who would be unlikely to ever support the aspiration.
3. Complete the top portion of the template below, describing each possible member.
4. Evaluate your list using the following criteria, and make any necessary changes.
    a. Diversity
    b. Balance
    c. Potential to work together
5. Check for overlap, make any necessary changes and finalize your guiding coalition members (suggested: six to eight members).

Discussion questions:

- How will you build trust and alignment among the group?
- What opportunities exist for your guiding coalition members to reinforce the importance of the CCSS/Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers?

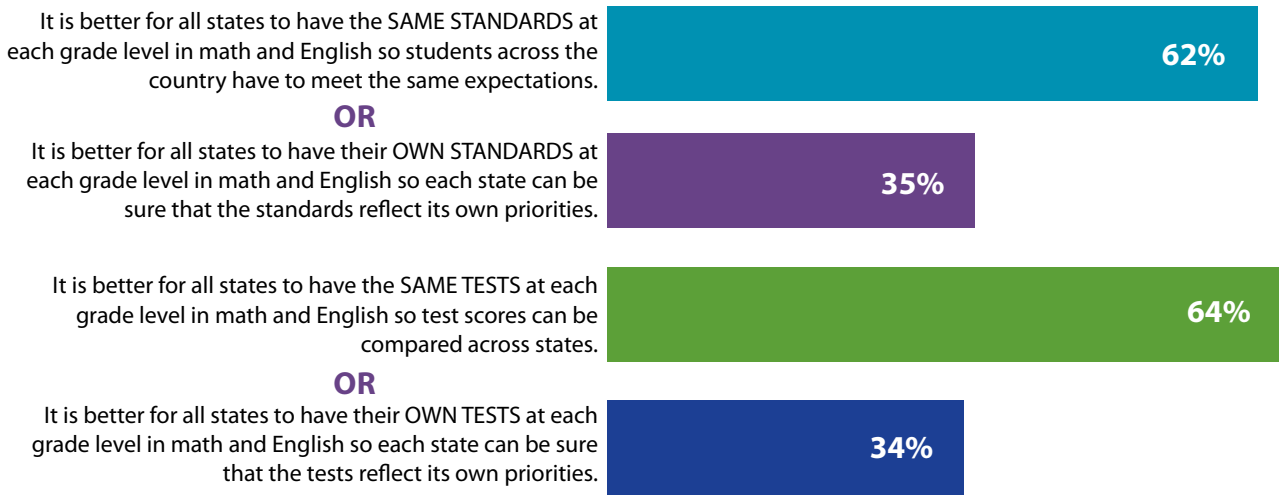
Person	Alignment with aspiration *(very low, low, high, very high)*	Potential for alignment with aspiration *(very low, low, high, very high)*	Relative power *(very low, low, high, very high)*	Type of power *(position, credibility, leadership, etc.)*	Sphere of influence *(legislature, teachers, department of education, etc.)*	Potential for difficulty with others

Communicate the Delivery Message and Widen the Circles of Leadership

Alone, the guiding coalition is insufficient to maintain public support. For the CCSS to improve pedagogy, teachers, principals and the broader public need to understand the "why" behind the effort: Why are the new standards and related assessments important? What is their moral purpose? They must also understand your system's strategy, how it will be carried out and, crucially, what it means for them.

Research suggests that registered voters have broad, but not necessarily deep (or intense), support for common standards and common assessments.[2]

Percentage of respondents who say this statement is closer to their point of view



Messages about the need for consistent expectations across and within states and high standards — and therefore equal opportunity — for all students should build off this base of support. The lack of intense support, though, also suggests that the public may be swayed by opposition messages, especially given the discomfort many already have with standardized testing and a reform program incentivized by the federal government. The best way to ensure that this does not occur is to play offense — make sure your messages and goals reach key audiences first and are regularly reinforced by credible messengers. In fact, don't be afraid to communicate even if your implementation plan is in flux. Rather than say nothing, be honest but clear about the decisions already made and the decisions still to come. All of this can be done via a communications plan.

An effective communications plan should answer five basic questions:

- Why are we making the change to the new standards?
- What is our aspiration?
- How do the CCSS differ from our state's current standards?
- Why choose this course?
- What does this mean for you?

The last question, in particular, may raise pressing concerns about possible changes to course requirements, instructional materials, and your assessment and accountability system.

Internal Communications and Coordination

An obvious, but important, first step is to assemble the core communications team of people you need to promote and gain support for the CCSS. While a compact team makes sense early on, over time you want to include policy and communications specialists from the governor's office, state education agency, higher education system/community, business community, and other public and third-party advocacy organizations. You may also want to add a district-level or a school-level leader to round out the team. Because this team is intentionally cross-sector, you will want to assign an individual or agency as the lead coordinator, ultimately responsible — and accountable — for executing the communications plan.

Before any efforts are taken to formally engage key stakeholders and local actors, states and districts need to recognize that communicating internally — among yourselves and your team members — is where all efforts must begin. The key to the **internal then external** communications strategy is to prevent any surprises. You never want one of your internal team to read about something you have done in the morning newspaper or first hear about it from a supervisor in his or her office.

States can make a number of efforts to coordinate their internal communications efforts:

- Host regular in-person meetings with your core communications team;
- Schedule conference calls when you cannot meet in person to allow for information-sharing and brainstorming as a team;
- Send a regular update to your core team, which can be as simple as an e-mail news alert or electronic newsletter; and
- Establish an e-mail distribution list of those internal people whom you must reach out to frequently to ensure that they are informed and on board with your efforts. Send them relevant news coverage, new studies and reports, and other related materials. Using an e-mail listserve is a no-cost way to keep other team members engaged and in the loop.

Having this cross-sector, core communications team in place also provides natural "ins" into critical organizations and stakeholder groups. Each team member, at a minimum, should make use of his or her existing networks and lines of communication within the person's organization.

Know Your Audience/Stakeholders

The first questions the core communications team should ask are: Who are the critical stakeholders in your state? What organizations or individuals have the ability to make or break the successful implementation of these education reforms? What organizations or individuals are critical to the long-term success and sustainability of the CCSS and related assessments?

Stakeholder mapping offers a natural starting point to answer these questions. By prioritizing the most critical stakeholders and identifying specific strategies for engagement, you can focus your outreach efforts — and identify potential champions among those already engaged and supportive. It is tempting to identify a large number of stakeholders to engage — such as educators, school administrators, district administrators, legislators, the state board of education, parents, students, higher education leaders, higher education faculty, community leaders, civil rights organizations and so on. But with limited resources and time to devote to communications and outreach, it is more useful to identify those individuals and organizations with the most to add — or detract — from the reform efforts and focus your efforts there.

Reaching Your Audience/Stakeholders: The Message

Developing **three key messages** around the CCSS and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is the core of the communications strategy. Typically, the first message defines the issue, the second outlines the problem and the third explains the solution. The key three should be distributed to all internal team members and communicated consistently, without variation, at all times. Repeat, repeat, repeat these messages across all communications channels and by all public messengers. Discuss the transition to the CCSS as a comprehensive reform, albeit one with many moving parts.

Key Three Messages

Example A:

- Existing standards and assessments put an undue burden on educators, students and the education system as a whole — and rarely provide the information needed to have a positive impact on any of those stakeholders.
- In addition, state standards and assessments have historically been set too low, offering an inaccurate view of how well our students are truly achieving.
- The Common Core State Standards and aligned common assessments are more rigorous than what we have in place now and will provide an honest picture of how well our students, schools and system are achieving on the most critical knowledge and skills in mathematics and English.

Example B:

- With nearly every state having adopted the Common Core State Standards, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform education across America and improve our global competitiveness.
- Currently, far too many students drop out or graduate from high school without the knowledge and skills required for success, closing doors and limiting their post-high school options. In our state, *XX* percent of students are dropping out before earning a high school diploma, and *XX* of first-year college students are enrolled in remedial (non-credit-bearing) courses.
- Implementing the Common Core State Standards is a critical step toward ensuring that all students receive the education they need for success in life.

In addition to the key three messages, your state will need to communicate critical information to certain groups, based on their role in the implementation process. Largely based on previous experiences with standards and assessments, certain pressure points are already clear. Think through the standard messaging and associated advocacy materials you need to develop to address such issues. For example:

- **Educators and school and district administrators** need to understand clearly what the transition will look like and how it will affect their day-to-day work:
  - Where are the biggest changes in instruction? How do the CCSS differ from the state's current standards?
  - What does full implementation look like? What is the final vision?
  - What will the new standards mean for curriculum and instructional materials?
  - What are the implications of implementing the CCSS before aligned assessments are in place?
  - What is the technology transition plan? (Or what steps are being taken to prepare for the transition to computer-based assessments given school-based and student-specific challenges?)
  - What does this mean for state and/or federal accountability?
- **Parents and community members,** on the other hand, need to know what this means for their kids:
  - What are the benefits of the reforms? How do they represent a step forward for the U.S. (and your community's) education system?
  - Will the new assessments be high stakes (with college-ready cut scores)?
  - What are the higher education incentives attached to the new standards and assessments? Which local institutions of higher education are engaged?
  - What supports will be offered to help students meet the raised expectations?
  - What supports will be offered to help educators teach the raised expectations?
  - What might happen if we don't embrace common standards and assessments?
- **Policymakers** might have more questions about how implementation will be paid for, but they also need to be prepared (and engaged enough) to respond to high-level concerns from educators and parents (aka their constituents):
  - Why are we making the change to new standards and assessments?
  - What are the upfront costs, and what are the costs (and savings) over time?
  - How can we use existing funds to cover the implementation costs?
  - What has been the level of involvement from the federal government? What will be its level of involvement moving forward?
  - What implications do the new standards and assessments have on career and technical education? On STEM education? On charter schools? On graduation rates?

As often as possible, relay exactly how the education community — and educators in particular — have been involved in the development of the new standards and how they will be involved in the development of the new common assessments. Teachers had a seat at the table and were engaged every step of the way in the CCSS development process, including drafting standards and providing feedback on various public drafts. The American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association were involved throughout. Those organizations plus the American Association of School Administrators and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, for example, all endorsed the final CCSS.

Reaching Your Audience/Stakeholders: The Messengers

Your cross-sector core communications team and the guiding coalition are all advocates throughout implementation. In addition, though, you need a broader set of engaged and informed messengers at all levels. Part of your communications plan must include the identification and development of **"ambassadors"** within key stakeholder groups who can serve as peer-to-peer messengers in support of the reforms.

For example, PARCC states will convene cadres of K–12 leaders from across the 25 PARCC states. These convenings will provide an opportunity to engage K–12 educators around a set of instructional tools developed to support the CCSS and PARCC assessments (e.g., content frameworks, professional development modules, etc.). These educator leaders — be they classroom teachers, school administrators or district leaders — will then be equipped to go back to their states and train other educators using the tools so that understanding of, support for and ownership of the implementation of the new CCSS and related assessments will grow throughout districts and schools. These same K–12 leaders can also serve as ambassadors for the CCSS and PARCC assessments.

Similarly, there are strategies for developing peer advocates in the state legislature, among community-based organizations, in the civil rights communities and among other critical voices for education reform. What is most important is that these messengers are engaged often, are kept in the loop as decisions are made that affect the implementation process, and are armed with the information and support they need to be successful peer advocates. ***You can learn more about communicating the delivery message here.***

CASE STORY: INDIANA

The Indiana Department of Education has made a wide range of instructional resources available to help educators understand the new CCSS and what the transition to the new standards will require. In addition to the state-developed curriculum maps, instructional transition guidance documents and implementation timelines, the department's CCSS web page also includes a series of short videos from state leaders explaining the new standards, including a number of videos that explore the connection between the new English language arts/literacy standards and other disciplines, such as science, history/social studies, agriculture, health science and fine arts.

CASE STORY: UTAH

Utah is organizing a series of ***Common Core Academies*** to provide professional development to the state's educators around the CCSS. Starting in summer 2011, the academies, offered at 14 sites around the state, will focus specifically on K–12 English language arts and 6th and 9th grade mathematics and will involve about 5,600 teachers. In addition, while the Utah State Office of Education has a well-developed ***CCSS page*** on its website, it also has partnered with the Utah Education Network and Higher Ed Utah/Utah System of Higher Education to develop a robust ***CCSS site*** that includes resources such as CCSS crosswalks, a sample letter to parents about the CCSS, suggested student

course progressions, an explanation of the assessment transition schedule, videos from the CCSS writers explaining the standards in English language arts and math, and sample student work and performance tasks (excerpted from the CCSS). This joint endeavor represents one way in which state education agencies can leverage partners and existing networks to communicate about the CCSS and related assessments.

CASE STORY: VERMONT

The Vermont Department of Education has created a ***"Common Core in Vermont" wiki*** to disseminate an assortment of tools and resources related to the implementation of the CCSS in Vermont, ranging from an updated implementation timeline to resources for educators to familiarize themselves with the new standards. The department continually updates the wiki with resources presented at state and regional meetings, as well as those created by local education leaders. This simple tool helps keep everyone on the same page.

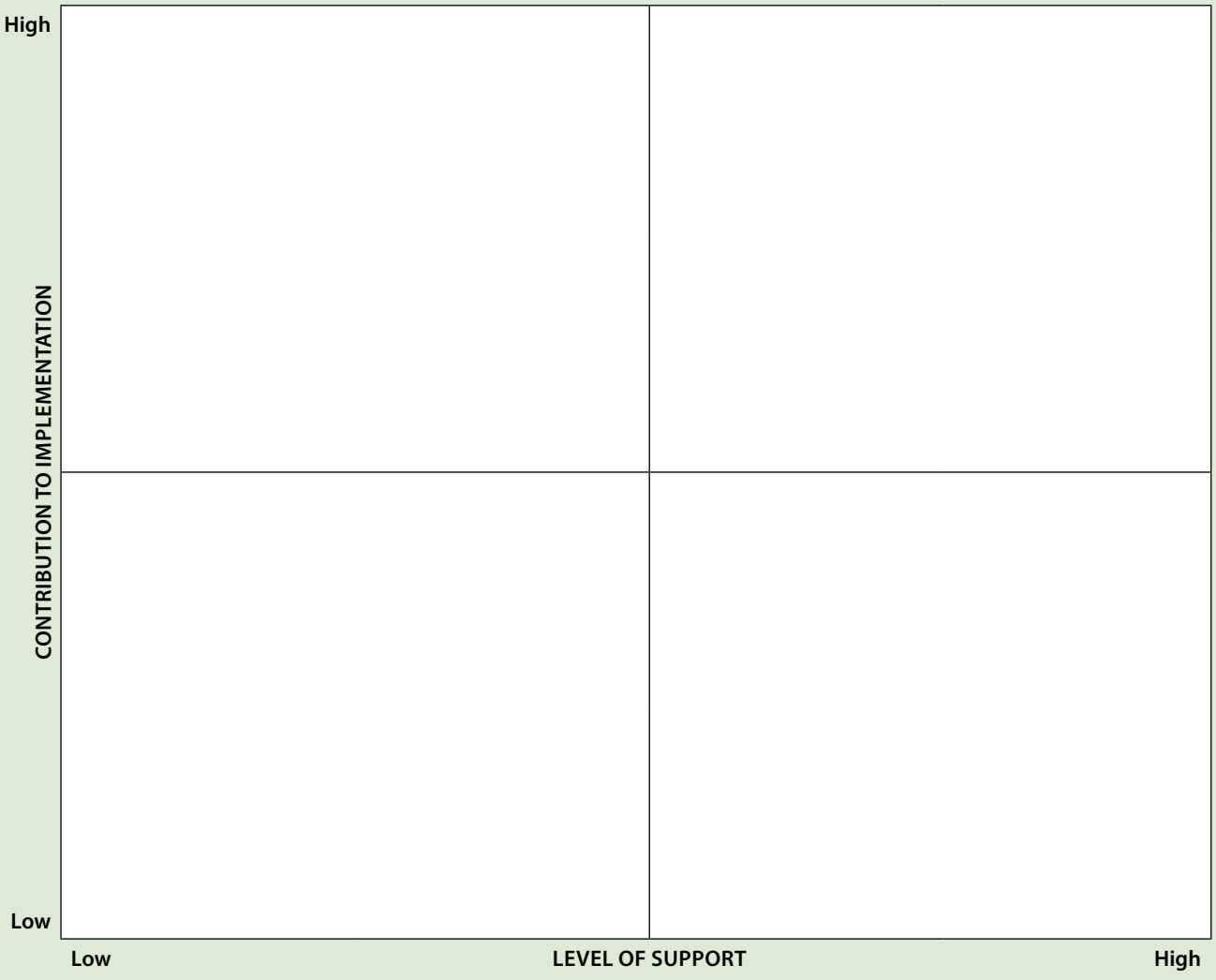
EXERCISE: IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS WHO ARE MOST CRITICAL TO SUCCESSFUL DELIVERY

Purpose: To identify and map those stakeholders who are most critical to successful implementation so you can prepare a communications plan for engaging their support.

Who should participate? The core communications team should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Brainstorm stakeholders who will need to be involved at all levels of implementation of the CCSS and related assessments. Be sure to consider those at the state, district, school and classroom levels, as well as external stakeholders, such as professional organizations.
2. Using the 2 x 2 matrix template below, place each of your key stakeholders according to the degree to which they contribute to CCSS implementation and their level of support.



3. Identify the stakeholders most critical to your goal. These are those individuals or groups who fall into the top half of the matrix and who present the greatest challenges in terms of engagement.
4. For each priority stakeholder you have identified, complete the mapping template on the next page. You can repeat this exercise specifically for the PARCC assessments.

(continued on next page)

		Stakeholder 1	Stakeholder 2	Stakeholder 3	Stakeholder 4
Stakeholder	Who are the key groups/individuals who need to be engaged in the implementation of the CCSS to ensure broad buy-in and shared ownership across the state?				
Contribution to implementation	How critical is the stakeholder to the success of the CCSS? • **High:** *Is critical to the success of the CCSS in the short and long terms* • **Medium:** *Has the potential to be a critical ally for the successful implementation of the CCSS* • **Low:** *Is not necessarily critical to the implementation of the CCSS at this time, but is an important ally for long-term success*				
Level of support	How supportive of the CCSS is this stakeholder? • **High:** *The group is very supportive of the CCSS* • **Medium:** *The group (or some individuals) are supportive, but this support can grow* • **Low:** *The group does not appear to support the CCSS at this time*				
Objective	Ideally, what would the engagement of this stakeholder look like?				
Outreach/engagement activities	What are ways in which states can engage the stakeholder? Sample activities include: • *One-on-one briefings* • *Scheduled presentations at group meetings* • *Partner to identify leadership cadre educators* • *Feedback on instructional and curricular tools/products*				
Outcomes	How will you know when this stakeholder is effectively engaged in your implementation project?				
Lead contact	Who should take the lead on engaging this stakeholder (be it someone inside or outside the government)?				

EXERCISE: DEVELOP A CORE SCRIPT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Purpose: To identify key messages and create a strategic communications plan for engaging key stakeholders.

Who should participate? The core communications team should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Examine the Sample Strategic Communications Plan on the next page, and think through the key messages and communications that might apply to your key stakeholders.
2. For each of the key stakeholders you identified in the prior exercise, complete the blank Strategic Communications Plan template, defining your key messages and detailing your plan for the communication of those messages.

(continued on next page)

<table>
<tr><th colspan="5">**Strategic Communications Plan** (EXAMPLE)</th></tr>
<tr><td>**Target audience/ stakeholder**</td><td colspan="4">**Define the target audience with specificity:** DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Objectives**</td><td colspan="4">**Define the outreach objectives:** To engage, over the course of the next six months, at least 75 percent of all local superintendents around CCSS implementation</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Key target messages (which fit under the key three messages)**</td><td colspan="4">**Outline the tailored submessages for this target group:**
• The CCSS directly address the common complaint that academic standards are "a mile wide and an inch deep" and will allow teachers to focus on the most important concepts rather than try and teach too many topics in one year.
• With nearly every state in the nation working to implement the CCSS, the opportunities for leveraging best practices and fully vetted instructional materials will be greater than ever.</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Channels/vehicles/ tools**</td><td colspan="4">**Identify the kinds of earned, paid and new media channels and/or outreach tools used to reach this audience:**
Superintendents will be targeted through:
• Putting CCSS and common assessments on the agenda at already-scheduled (and to-be-scheduled) statewide meetings.
• Smaller briefings with superintendents representing urban, suburban and rural districts to address their geographic-specific concerns about implementation.
• Asking superintendents (and educators) to sign on to a letter — or compact with the state department of education — committing to working together to see through the full implementation of the new standards. For some, this could take the form of a Race to the Top Scope of Work.
• Monthly conference calls or webinars (which are recorded and made available online) about progress (and modifications) made on implementing the CCSS and developing the common assessments.
• Fact sheets about the implementation timeline for the CCSS, which superintendents can personalize and share with their administrators, district staff and teachers.
• Suggested initial boilerplate language/links for district websites.</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Timeline**</td><td colspan="4">**For each channel/vehicle/tool, define the timeline for implementation:**
Template for stakeholder communications plan
Stakeholder: District Superintendents Objective: Engagement
What specific tools will we use to achieve our objective with this stakeholder and when?</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>**Communications tools**</td><td>**January**</td><td>**February**</td><td>**March**</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Convenings</td><td></td><td>Statewide meeting</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Individual briefings</td><td>Establish schedule</td><td>20 briefings</td><td>20 briefings</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Compact to work together on the CCSS</td><td>Notify districts</td><td>Deadline to sign compact 2/28</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Webinars</td><td></td><td>Run webinar</td><td>Run webinar</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Distribution of fact sheets and boilerplate language</td><td></td><td>Develop materials
Consult with key superintendents</td><td>Distribute materials</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Measuring success**</td><td colspan="4">**Define what actions the target audience could take to show success:**
• At least 75 percent of urban, suburban and rural superintendents demonstrate support for implementation through a compact or some other means.
• At least 50 percent of districts have a web page dedicated to the CCSS and/or PARCC, with relevant details about implementation, links to resources and contact information for state department of education staff.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Strategic Communications Plan</th></tr>
<tr><td>Target audience/ stakeholder</td><td>Define the target audience with specificity:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Objectives</td><td>Define the outreach objectives:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key target messages (which fit under the key three messages)</td><td>Outline the tailored submessages for this target group:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Channels/vehicles/ tools</td><td>Identify the kinds of earned, paid and new media channels and/or outreach tools used to reach this audience:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Timeline</td><td>For each channel/vehicle/tool, define the timeline for implementation:
Template for stakeholder communications plan
Stakeholder: Objective:

What specific tools will we use to achieve our objective with this stakeholder and when?
<table>
<tr><th>Communications tools</th><th>January</th><th>February</th><th>March</th></tr>
<tr><td>Speeches/presentations</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Convenings</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Individual meetings</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Notes/letters/e-mails</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Others?</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Measuring success</td><td>Define what actions the target audience could take to show success:</td></tr>
</table>

Conclusion

You should now have a solid communications plan to accompany the CCSS implementation effort. The plan contains key messages and messengers, a stakeholder engagement strategy, and how a guiding coalition can be used to support the transition to the CCSS and the related assessments. It is time now to plan for the first transition that states and districts will face — how to ensure that every mathematics and English language arts teacher has in his or her hands instructional materials and curricula aligned to the CCSS.

ENDNOTES

1 Kotter (1996). *Leading Change.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

2 Achieve (2010). *Achieving the Possible: What Americans Think About the College- and Career-Ready Agenda.*

NOTES

5. TAKE ACTION

Implementation Action I

Align Instructional Materials to the Common Core State Standards

Part of **IMPLEMENTING Common Core State Standards and Assessments**

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

To download the full workbook, go to www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook

Achieve

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IN THIS SECTION

5. Implementation Action I: Align Instructional Materials to the Common Core State Standards

Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- Does the system have clear strategies to ensure that high-quality instructional materials are aligned to the Common Core State Standards?
- How will all mathematics and English language arts teachers receive these materials?
- What information and feedback loops will be used to monitor whether instructional practice changes?

Transitioning to new standards poses an early challenge — how to place high-quality, research-based curricula and instructional materials aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in the hands of teachers. Before you can begin an intensive professional development push, this action first needs to occur so that principals and teachers have the materials on which they will be trained. Despite widespread differences in how states and districts adopt curricula and textbooks, you can do a lot to plan for a smooth transition. In fact, this transition may be a hidden opportunity to work with other states and districts on the analysis and adoption of materials — the kind of collaboration that the CCSS now make possible.

The strategic implementation team should task a specific working group with leading this endeavor. One of the first actions this working group can take is to identify high-capacity districts capable of piloting efforts in front of statewide implementation. The working group will also want to involve educators during the creation of instructional tools and materials, as teachers clearly know better than anyone what they need to effectively teach the new standards and to build support across the education community. Taking the time to craft a **delivery plan** will help the working group identify exactly how aligned instructional materials are developed and distributed across the state.

Draft the Delivery Plan: Prioritizing the Reform Strategy

Before thinking about the "how" of implementation, it is important to decide on the "what": What is your strategy for getting aligned instructional materials into the hands of teachers and principals? There are obviously multiple options; your task is to prioritize those activities that are most likely to help your system achieve its aspiration for instructional materials. ***You can learn more about prioritizing the reform strategy here.*** Following is a set of possible activities to consider in the formal adoption, purchase and/or creation of aligned materials and curricula. The delivery plan should be iterative, and evidence from student work should constantly inform adjustments to instruction or curricular materials.

Better Align Current Materials

Establishing alignment criteria sets an important quality control standard for the industry. How this is done will depend on the degree of state authority, level of content expertise in leading districts and economies of scale. Several options merit consideration:

1. **Compare current instructional materials to the CCSS.** States can convene panels of teachers, administrators and content experts to examine instructional materials alongside the CCSS and determine what needs to change and what can stay the same. This activity is best completed by the state education agency, given the economies of scale. It can be time consuming. Yet states and districts should resist the temptation to paper over gaps and should be candid about whether and how their materials need to change to reflect the new standards. Panels or committees that accomplish this work should summarize whether alignment exists in different grades and subjects and, if not, what changes will be necessary.

2. **Release lists of model materials or books that states have determined are aligned.** This option is most appropriate in those states that leave materials adoption to local districts. Here the state is providing guidance and allowing districts to focus on how materials will be used.

3. **Develop a list of "must haves" that districts can look to when determining CCSS alignment with their materials.** This option is most appropriate in states that are legislatively prohibited from identifying materials or books.

4. **Share strong district-driven comparisons with other districts.** Where leading districts have already completed a high-quality crosswalk comparison, the state education agency can share this work with the other districts in the state.

5. **Develop a rubric to aid the textbook adoption process.** Though publishers are also likely to undertake this task, it may be wise for states and districts to also take their own look, either individually or collaboratively, to ensure alignment of content and cognitive demand and, of course, quality.

Delivery Plans

"The plan is nothing. The planning is everything."
— Dwight Eisenhower

The delivery plan provides a road map for how the implementation should proceed. This important operational tool is a work in progress, and there is no such thing as a perfect plan. A good delivery plan begins with the end in mind, linking the purpose of the plan (developing aligned instructional materials) to the overall vision for the system (improved student learning outcomes).

Unlike a typical strategic plan, the delivery plan should connect three primary components: the prioritized reform strategies, relevant delivery chains and expected impact upon key outcome metrics. The plan should also meet the following criteria. It should:

- **Assign leadership, management and accountability** for the plan owner and project managers (e.g., those responsible for major strategies or activities).
- **Detail performance management,** such as key indicators that can be used to monitor the impact of the plan more regularly or implementation milestones to track implementation progress.
- **Describe the resources and support required** for the plan's success.
- **Prepare to manage stakeholders and users** by providing a thoughtful engagement strategy.
- **Anticipate and prepare for risks** that might throw the work off course, with particular attention given to how implementation can go awry.

You can learn more about creating delivery plans here.

Again, where leading districts have already completed one or more of these activities, creating networks to share with other school districts will help the state leverage this important work.

Generate New Materials

6. **Create a role for open education resources (OERs).** Ranging from wholly contained instructional modules to units of study with lesson plans and assessments to worksheets for use in a single lesson, OERs are gaining momentum among teachers, districts and state agencies alike. These important classroom tools are generally freely available, dynamic resources that can be edited by their communities of users and shared with others. Like any instructional resource, though, OERs need to be reviewed to ensure alignment with the CCSS and to assess quality. In recognition of the growing role of OERs, some states' and districts' current content adoption procedures allow for the consideration of OERs. In addition, some states are actively working toward the incorporation of OERs into their recommended instructional materials libraries. If your state or district does not yet have policies around OERs, aligning the CCSS to instructional tools provides the perfect opportunity to address this emerging issue.

7. **Develop prototype model lesson plans, curricula and pacing guides.** For states that won the federal Race to the Top competition in particular, this homegrown activity features prominently in project plans at the state and/or district levels. Validating for quality and utility is important. Also, these prototypes can catalyze further activity if shared with key vendors in the marketplace.

8. **Acquire supplemental materials** that publishers can change more quickly to meet the CCSS, such as websites, teachers' guides, lesson planning materials, CD-ROMs and other classroom tools (most appropriate for states that just underwent an adoption cycle and face questions as to how aggressively they can afford to adopt new materials).

9. **Harness collaborative technology** by creating a bottom-up mechanism for high-quality open-source instructional materials to be developed. Though there are many quality control questions to resolve in this activity, taking this "wiki"-like approach can unleash the creative potential of school- and district-level instructional leaders.

Leverage the Power of the CCSS

10. **Collaborate across states.** Once states and districts have determined their vision for aligned instructional materials, they should check with other states and districts about their own materials adoption and alignment process. The opportunities for efficiencies that come with multiple states and districts conducting alignment reviews and buying materials is attractive to both purchasers and publishers. In particular, collaboration can help ensure that new textbooks and instructional tools cover the CCSS and little else, moving beyond the bloated, "inch deep, mile wide" approach publishers now typically take in developing materials that work for a multitude of states with differing standards.

11. **Draw on the Model Content Frameworks and model instructional units developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).** The Model Content Frameworks provide state-level content leads and district-level curriculum developers with a road map of how the CCSS may be organized to show the big ideas in each quarter within each grade. PARCC will also release model instructional units for how to teach the standards measured by the through-course assessments.

Resources to Support CCSS and PARCC Implementation

PARCC Model Content Frameworks for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics

The PARCC Model Content Frameworks were developed to provide a bridge between the CCSS and the PARCC assessment system. They were developed through a state-led process that included mathematics and English language arts/literacy content experts in PARCC states and members of the CCSS writing team. They are designed to:

- Support implementation of the CCSS; and
- Inform the development of item specifications and blueprints for the PARCC assessments in grades 3–8 and high school.

The Model Content Frameworks are voluntary resources offered by PARCC to help states, curriculum developers and teachers as they work to implement the standards. They can be used in a number of ways including:

- Informing the development of curriculum, instructional materials and assessments;
- Increasing educator engagement and awareness;
- Guiding professional development activities around the CCSS and PARCC (see Chapter 6); and
- Assisting in evaluating current or new resources.

The Model Content Frameworks are intended to be dynamic and responsive to evidence and ongoing input. As such, PARCC will again solicit feedback on the Model Content Frameworks in spring 2012 once states and educators have had the opportunity to use them. PARCC will release a refined version of the Model Content Frameworks in summer 2012, incorporating feedback as needed. *To download copies of the Model Content Frameworks or to view webinars about the frameworks, visit the PARCC website.*

Educator Leader Cadres

Over the next three years (2012–14), PARCC will directly engage teams of 24 educators from each PARCC state in professional development aligned to the CCSS and the PARCC assessment system. These 24 individuals — the Educator Leader Cadres (ELCs) — will come together as a team several times annually to engage in close study of the CCSS, the PARCC Model Content Frameworks and the PARCC prototype tasks. This close study will then lay the foundation for the ELCs to review and provide feedback on instructional materials using state-developed alignment tools. Through this effort, the ELCs will help ensure the quality and alignment of those materials to the CCSS and PARCC assessments and suggest additional tools when necessary. Materials reviewed by the ELCs will be made available for use in states, districts and schools.

The ELCs will serve as an important resource for states. Not only will they provide a vehicle for sharing quality instructional materials aligned to the CCSS and PARCC assessments across districts and states, but they can also provide technical expertise to develop new materials and/or review and adapt existing materials. *See the "Educator Leader Cadres" box in Chapter 6 to read about the ELCs' role in professional development. To read more about the ELCs, visit the PARCC website.*

Model Instructional Units

States and districts should be asking two critical questions when developing new instructional materials, reviewing existing materials or evaluating materials for adoption: Are these materials high quality? And do these materials align to the CCSS? To help build state and district capacity to answer these questions, PARCC will be developing materials that address the issues of quality and alignment. Designed as electronically available professional development modules, these materials will give states and districts the tools they need to:

- Create high-quality instructional materials that align to the CCSS;
- Adapt instructional materials to align to the CCSS; and
- Evaluate the alignment and quality of other materials.

They are due to be available spring/summer 2013.

To identify the right set of high-impact activities that make up your state's reform strategy, the working group should discuss the following key questions:

- **How are curriculum and instructional materials developed in your state today?** Many actors, from the state itself to vendors and publishers, create a complex curricular arena for teachers and schools to navigate. What is the current "market share" — by both volume and funding — of the state agency? Textbook publishers and other vendors? School districts? Nonprofits and other nongovernmental groups? Individual principals and teachers? Knowing this information will help identify where the necessary changes will need to come from. *See sample delivery chain on p. 5.10.*

- **What would it mean to differentiate districts by their capacity to develop or implement aligned instructional materials?** Placing aligned instructional materials in the hands of teachers may mean crafting separate approaches for high-, medium- and low-capacity districts. High-capacity districts are generally ahead of the state in launching new curricula that lead to teaching and learning improvements. District leaders plead for clarity about when content standards, assessment blueprints and related policies will change and then ask for the state to step aside. Districts with medium internal capacity typically have steady student performance — albeit persistent achievement gaps — and selectively engage with the state when opportunities arise. These districts may appreciate economies of scale provided by the state, for example. Implementing the CCSS poses the greatest challenge in districts with low internal capacity. Here, the state needs to inject additional urgency, training and support. Each district's accountability status can help form this categorization.

- **Finally, what must the timing of this effort be to get new materials in the hands of teachers?** Specifically, what is the current textbook adoption cycle, and how does it coincide with the CCSS timeline? Are there set plans to introduce new curriculum and pacing guides and the PARCC assessments? And when must these materials be complete for high-quality professional development to occur on the new standards, assessments and materials?

CASE STORY: CALIFORNIA

The California Department of Education has published a ***model curriculum framework***, organized by grade, that is designed to support California's transition to the CCSS. For each grade, the framework describes what a student should know upon entering that grade. A narrative description of the standards by domain/strand makes note of topics that are now being addressed at a new grade (e.g., "With full implementation of CCSS, how to recognize, name, and compare fractions will be addressed at grade three, a grade two topic in the 1997 California mathematics standards."). Each grade also includes a section addressing support for English language learners. Finally, crosswalk charts highlight some of the more significant changes to be considered as California progresses toward full implementation of the CCSS.

CASE STORY: OHIO

The Ohio Department of Education has released draft ***K–12 Model Curricula*** for mathematics and English language arts. The grade-level breakdowns of the standards by domain in mathematics and strand in English language arts include content elaborations, expectations for learning, instructional strategies and resources, common misconceptions of students around specific skills and concepts, and how teachers can differentiate instruction in math, and they make connections to related standards in other grades. The department led the model curricula development but worked closely with teams of teachers to collect instructional strategies and resources aligned to the CCSS and build understanding and buy-in along the way.

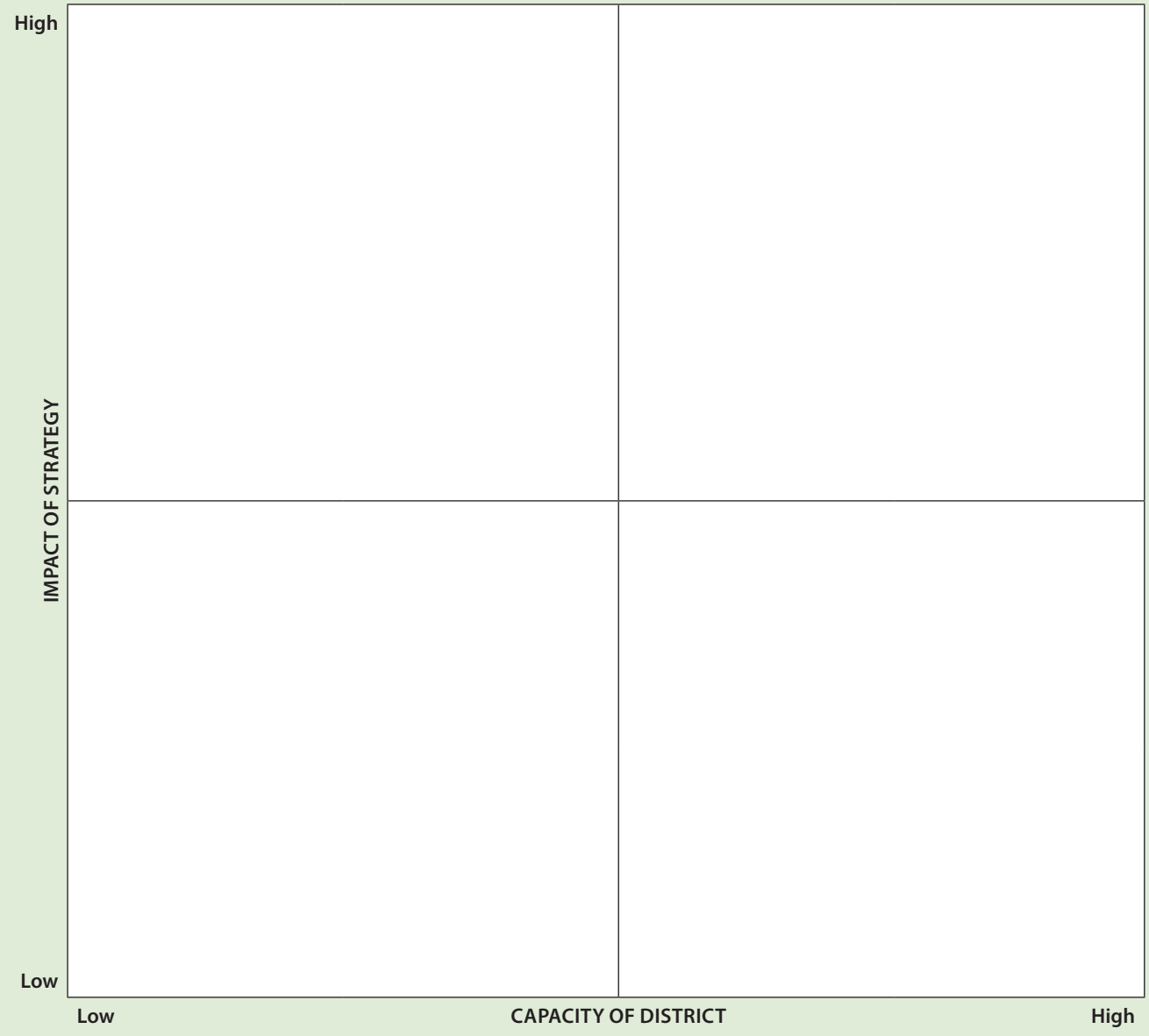
EXERCISE: IDENTIFY YOUR REFORM STRATEGIES FOR ALIGNED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Purpose: To articulate your prioritized reform strategy. With options from your own state and this workbook in hand, narrow the list and choose those activities that will have the greatest impact.

Who should participate? The working group for aligned instructional materials should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Brainstorm the strategies you will use for the implementation of the new curricula and instructional materials. These can include both changes to current system activities and the creation of new system activities. Consider that your strategies may be different for high-capacity districts and low-capacity districts.
2. Plot your strategies on the 2 x 2 matrix below. Place the strategies for low-capacity districts in the left quadrants and those for high in the right (you can plot the same strategy twice if it touches both high- and low-capacity districts). Be sure to consider the impact of each strategy, and place it in either the top quadrants for high impact or the bottom quadrants for low impact.



Draft the Delivery Plan: Determine the Delivery Chain(s)

How will teachers receive new instructional materials for use in the classroom? To answer this question, the working group must identify the **delivery chain.** The delivery chain is the set of actors, and the relationships among them, through which the activities you have chosen will be implemented. The delivery chain for aligned instructional materials answers one core question: Starting from the intent of state leaders and ending with the desired change in behavior on the front line (teachers improving their practice based on the new materials), how — and through whom — will the development and dissemination of these instructional materials actually happen? In other words, what is the mechanism through which the materials will be distributed and adopted for use in the field?

Delivery chains can be drawn in any number of ways. The specific shape of your delivery chain matters less than whether you (1) have a well-articulated delivery chain and (2) have confidence that it will get the job done. For aligned instructional materials, selecting the right distribution mechanisms may be affected by the gap between current and future standards, the extent of the state's legal authority, and how the state interacts with high- and low-capacity districts. In those states with considerable legal authority and a minimal gap between current and future standards, for example, the state education agency can produce the materials directly or dictate the necessary adjustments to the marketplace (activities 7 and 8, page 5.5). Conversely, a state in which such decisions are exclusively left to districts may need to focus instead upon ensuring alignment rather than generating instructional materials directly (activities 2–5, page 5.4). Those states looking for ways to let teachers and schools drive material development may want to leverage the benefits of technology (activities 6 and 9, page 5.5).

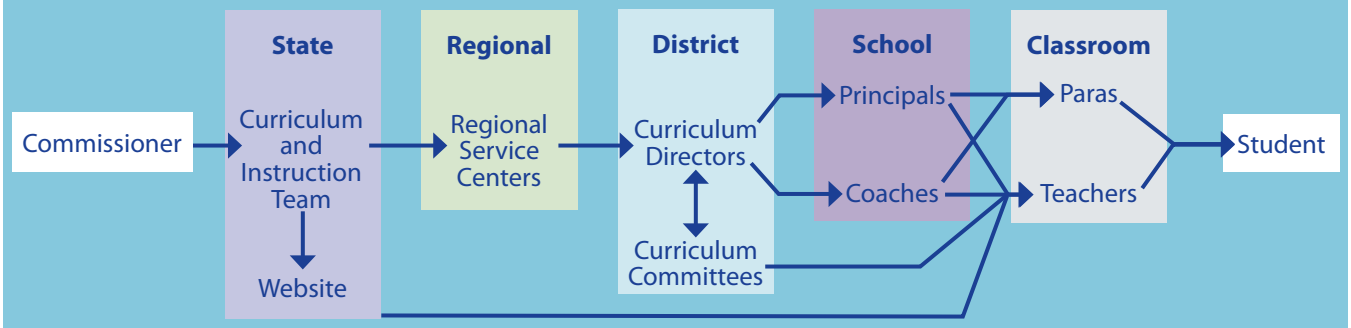
Once you have identified your delivery chain, it is important to probe for areas of potential weakness. Questions to consider:

- **Individual relationships:** What is the quality of personal relationships among critical actors? Where are the areas of strongest (e.g., line authority) and weakest (e.g., entirely reliant on persuasion) leverage?
- **Complexity:** How many actors are involved in the delivery chain? How easy or difficult is coordinating these actors to get something done?
- **Funding flows:** What are the major sources of funding and resources? Who controls these flows, and in which direction(s) do they go?
- **Feedback loops:** What mechanisms are in place to help us know what is happening on the ground? How will you know that the desired change is occurring at the other end of the delivery chain?
- **Choke points:** Are there particular actors that you disproportionately depend on to get something done?

To the extent that you find weaknesses, your plan must lay out the ways in which you intend to address them. In some cases, this may mean strengthening relationships in the delivery chain, perhaps by borrowing from the practices of your strongest existing relationships. In some cases, it can mean redesigning the chain entirely — usually with the aim of simplifying it, removing unnecessary actors or easing the pressure on overburdened ones. ***You can learn more about delivery chain analysis here.***

Delivery Chains: From the Classroom Perspective

One easy way to think about the chain's complexity is to think about it from the perspective of the teacher looking to improve his or her practice. For example, consider the delivery chain for model curricula created by one PARCC state:



From the point of view of the teacher in the classroom, a few key questions emerge:

- How many different inputs are there? The figure shows that the teacher may be receiving information on instructional materials from principals and coaches in schools, curriculum committees in districts, and a website run at the state level.
- To what extent are these inputs coordinated? There are two types of coordination to consider:
  - **Aggregate coordination** means that multiple inputs apply to the same teacher but they reinforce the same message or work. For example, if there is one agreed-upon model curriculum, and all four of these inputs are teaching the same thing, it may be helpful for a teacher to receive information from multiple sources. When aggregate coordination fails, there is the risk of either overloading or annoying the teacher with duplicative touchpoints.
  - **Complementary coordination** means either that the different inputs apply to different teachers or that the messages of inputs to the same teacher complement one another. For example, curriculum committees may be the primary vehicle for delivering the model curricula in large districts, but principals and coaches work together to do this in small districts that have no model curricula. The website may be an optional but universally accessible tool that provides teachers with reference materials when they get stuck. When complementary coordination fails, some teachers may have too many touchpoints while others have none at all.

If the view from the classroom is not clear, your delivery chain likely is overly complex.

EXERCISE: MAP THE DELIVERY CHAIN FOR ALIGNED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Purpose: To draw a delivery chain for instructional materials, identify the weaknesses in it and identify solutions to address those weaknesses.

Who should participate? The working group for instructional materials should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. List the key actors in your ideal delivery chain — the ones who will be a critical part of getting instructional materials into the hands of teachers. Think of actors at five levels: state, region (if applicable), district, school and classroom. In addition to recording which actors are involved, please note how many of each there are in your state (e.g., 100 superintendents, 1,000 principals, etc.). Keep the following questions in mind:
    a. What materials will come from the state?
    b. What materials will come from the district?
    c. Will materials and curricula be affected by other actors in the chain?
    d. Will the delivery chain be different for high- and low-capacity districts? (You may need two variations.)
    e. Will the delivery chain be different for the various activities in your strategy?
2. Draw the single, more important line of influence between the system leader and the student, and articulate how you would like it to function. Some questions to keep in mind:
    a. What options are available to the state?
    b. What are we (at the state level) good at?
    c. What has been the impact of how we historically roll out new instructional materials?
3. Identify and draw secondary lines to other actors who need to be involved.
4. On the delivery chain, identify the feedback loop — the method you will use to identify whether or not implementation is working.
5. Identify potential weaknesses in the delivery chain and the ways you will address them. Use the worksheet template on the next page.

Potential weaknesses in delivery chains (EXAMPLE)

	Typical challenges	Potential solutions
Individual relationships	• Weak personal relationships • Low leverage	• Identify and replicate stronger relationships of this type • Identify alternate routes to the end of the chain
Complexity	• Too many actors necessary to get something done	• "Rationalize" chain • Identify alternate routes to the end of the chain
Funding flows	• Mismatch between resource flows and delivery chain	• Redesign chain to take advantage of leverage from resource flows
Feedback loops	• Few or no feedback loops	• Create feedback loops • Use feedback loops to exert influence
Choke points	• Over-reliance on a few key actors	• Build capacity/cooperation of key actors • Identify alternate routes to the end of the chain

(continued on next page)

Delivery chain analysis of weaknesses and solutions worksheet

	Potential weaknesses	Potential solutions
Individual relationships		
Complexity		
Funding flows		
Feedback loops		
Choke points		
Other		

Draft the Delivery Plan: Connecting Activities to Expected Outcomes

Implementation planning typically ends once aligned instructional materials are placed in the hands of teachers. Yet equal attention is needed to ensure that teacher instruction *actually changes*. Are these instructional materials sufficiently aligned and of value? How are they being used? What impact are they having on classroom teaching and student learning? To answer these questions, the working group should connect activities to their expected outcomes and create or leverage the feedback loops in the delivery chain to track impact.

First, the working group needs to identify a clear **timeline** of when planned activities need to occur. Sequencing the key deliverables will show when the benefits of the activities will be felt in the field. A "deliverable" is a milestone or end product for an activity. For example, if the state plans to release new model curricula to all district curriculum directors, one deliverable might be that all curriculum directors have received this communication by a certain date. Tracking whether these deliverables are met is an important project management discipline.

Next, the working group needs to articulate the **success measures** to track. Three potential types of measures merit discussion:

- **Alignment:** To what extent are principals and teachers using the instructional materials and model curricula, and to what extent are they using them with fidelity to the original design? Potential metrics include self-reporting of usage by teachers or observations of teacher behavior for a sample of classrooms, either observed directly or reported by principals.
- **User satisfaction:** To what extent do principals and teachers using the instructional materials find them to be helpful in aiding student learning on the new CCSS? The potential metric in this area would be a user satisfaction survey for principals and teachers.
- **Impact on student outcomes:** To what extent do principals and teachers using the instructional materials and model curricula achieve better results for their students? Potential metrics include formative assessment data, comparing teachers who use the instructional materials and model curricula with those who do not, or summative assessment data, compared in the same way.

At the highest level, these success measures are outcome oriented. At the most basic, they are process oriented. Both types of success measures, and the intermediate metrics that connect them, demonstrate your system's theory of action for how the prioritized activities will actually result in real impact. Making this connection is hard work, and there will be disagreements about what to measure. However, without having the difficult conversations on this topic, you will not have a true compass to know if your activities influence the outcomes you care most about.

You may also need to design new mechanisms for data collection. Some examples include adding questions to an existing working conditions survey, developing an online survey and creating incentives for participation, using technology to conduct some observations, building mechanisms for data collection into new teacher evaluation systems, and building or adapting formative and summative assessment systems to be interoperable with other collected data. The feedback loop(s) you have identified in the delivery chain exercise should get you part or all of the way there — and in the end, this discussion will also influence how those feedback loops are designed.

Finally, you will want to set targets. Consider what you want the overall impact on student outcomes to be as teachers receive and are influenced by instructional materials. To get that level of impact, how strong will your alignment and user satisfaction have to be? If you hit the milestones in your timeline, what impact will that have on the success metrics? How should you see them move over time? Now that you have articulated your success

metrics, activities and implementation timeline, it is time to put them together to estimate the impact of these activities over time. The resulting trajectory will help you monitor progress over the next several years and will give you an early indication of whether you are on track to achieve your desired results. ***You can learn more about trajectories here***.

Like the discussion about success metrics, this one will be challenging. Trying to estimate the future is uncomfortable, especially when you are accountable for it. Moreover, the various components are interdependent: Your expected impact over time is based on your selection of success metrics and activities, but your selection of activities may in turn be influenced by a need to achieve the targets you have set. Two things are worth bearing in mind:

- The estimate of impact over time is a *guideline* for you, not a hard prediction. The real purpose of the estimate is to compare it to what actually happens and use the differential to drive any mid-course corrections. It is not to create additional accountability with consequences.
- Revisiting prior discussions is good, and even necessary, at this stage. Activities, success metrics and impact over time are interdependent variables. As you discuss one, it makes sense to revise and refine the other two until you have a balance that represents an ambitious but realistic plan for real progress.

The following case story demonstrates how to create a feedback loop to monitor project deliverables and impact.

CASE STORY (Modified from an implementation plan created by a PARCC state)

One PARCC state plans to pilot a model mathematics curriculum for the critical 8th grade year. Its plan involves piloting the curriculum with 50 teachers in summer 2011 so that they align their instructional practice to the expectations in the CCSS for the 2011–12 school year. Then, in summer 2012, a refined and modified model curriculum will be posted on the department's website and promoted in 100 critical districts. The deliverables for this plan are as follows:

Deliverables by year and quarter		
Model curriculum for 8th grade math		
2011	Q1	
	2	
	3	Pilot with 50 teachers
	4	
2012	Q1	
	2	
	3	Scale up to 100 critical districts
	4	
2013	Q1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
2014	Q1	
	2	
	3	
	4	

To track progress, the department created a feedback loop consisting of three metrics:

	Metrics	Targets for 2014	Data collection mechanism(s)
Alignment	Number of 8th grade math teachers using the new curriculum (cumulative)	260	School climate survey
User satisfaction	Number of 8th grade math teachers using the new curriculum who report that it is helping them improve outcomes (cumulative)	190	School climate survey
Impact on student outcomes	Additional number of proficient students on 8th grade math assessment	2,031	Student assessment results

Targets in the plan are drawn from the department's analysis of the impact of these measures in the next two years:

- In summer 2011, the department assumes that the 50 teachers who pilot the reform will have a 100 percent satisfaction rate (because they will be selected specifically for the pilot). Each teacher teaches five math classes of 25 students apiece. This means that the new curricula will affect 6,250 students, of which 57 percent are now scoring below proficient. Based on historical data, the department drew a conservative hypothesis that each pilot teacher would move 15 percent of the below proficient students into the proficient category, for a total impact of 534 additional proficient students at the end of the 2011–12 school year. These gains are assumed to persist in later years.

- In summer 2012, the department intends to expand the curriculum to 100 critical districts, of which 21 are expected to fully integrate it into their instructional practice. Assuming that 10 8th grade mathematics teachers in each district implement the curriculum, this means that 210 new teachers will use the model curriculum. The department projects user satisfaction to drop to 66 percent due to dilution, which means that 140 new teachers will really use the materials to improve pedagogy. Using the same assumptions above, this means that 17,500 students will be affected by the new model curriculum, of which 1,497 will move from below proficient into the proficient category. This trajectory is summarized below:

Impact on success measure by year and quarter				
Metric		Alignment	User satisfaction	Student outcomes
Baseline		0	0	0
2011	Q1			
	2			
	3	+50		
	4		+50	
2012	Q1			
	2			+534
	3	+210		
	4			
2013	Q1		+140	
	2			+1,497
	3			
	4			
2014	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			

Thus, this state's plan for implementing a new model curriculum clearly connects its activities and timeline to an expected outcome of 2,031 additional proficient students, complete with a feedback loop that will help it understand whether it is on track to reach this target. The following exercises walk you through the necessary steps to create a similar picture in your state or district.

EXERCISE: CREATE A TIMELINE OF DELIVERABLES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND MODEL CURRICULA

Purpose: To create a specific sequence of activities and deliverables for getting aligned instructional materials into the hands of teachers.

Who should participate? The working group for instructional materials should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Think through the activities you previously identified and the delivery chain you drew, and create a list of the deliverables for instructional materials and model curricula for which you will be responsible.
2. If any deliverables already have hard dates associated with them, place those in the appropriate place in the template below.
3. Use the template below to create a timeline for the other deliverables between now and 2015. Prioritize, where necessary, based on the impact you have already identified. The model timeline in Chapter 3 can aid your thinking.

Deliverables by year and quarter

Activity					
2012	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2013	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2014	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2015	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				

EXERCISE: SET SUCCESS METRICS AND TARGETS

Purpose: To set metrics and targets for your activities so you can assess success according to the feedback loop.

Who should participate? The working group for instructional materials should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Determine how you will measure success in terms of alignment, user satisfaction and impact on student outcomes, and record this in the Metrics column in the template below.
2. Next, identify specific, numerical targets you aim to achieve, based on the metrics you established. Consider what you want the overall impact on student outcomes to be as new curricular materials are placed in the hands of teachers. To have that level of impact, how strong will alignment and user satisfaction have to be? Record these in the Targets column in the template below.
3. Finally, identify the mechanism(s) through which you will collect these data. Record this in the Data Collection Mechanism(s) column in the template below.

	Metrics	Targets	Data collection mechanism(s)
Alignment			
User satisfaction			
Impact on student outcomes			

EXERCISE: ESTIMATE IMPACT OVER TIME

Purpose: To connect planned activities to success metrics and targets to create a trajectory of estimated impact over time.

Who should participate? The working group for instructional materials should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. For each of your success metrics, create a baseline by estimating what the current level is (where possible). Can you audit existing instructional materials for alignment? Do you have current surveys of teacher and principal satisfaction with instructional materials that you can use? What do you know about the relevant student outcome measures? Make the best estimate that you can — it will not be perfect because many of these measures are new.
2. Connect the key deliverables to the impact you expect your selected activities to have. Specifically, given the timing of the deliverables you have previously identified, consider the potential impact on alignment, user satisfaction and student outcome metrics. Designate impact on each measure in each time period as "zero," "low," "medium" or "high," and record this on the template on the next page.
3. Assign a numerical value to the "low," "medium" and "high" categories, and calculate the expected numerical impact on each of your success metrics. Does this picture look plausible? Are there areas where you overshoot or undershoot? Are there assumptions underlying your estimates that need to change?

(continued on next page)

Impact on success measure by year and quarter: Success measure 1				
Metric		Alignment	User satisfaction	Student outcomes
2012	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
2013	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
2014	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
2015	Q1			
	2			
	3			
	4			

Conclusion

You should now have a clear plan for how to provide the state's teachers with aligned instructional materials and curricula. The plan considers what success in 2014–15 will look like; key activities and the delivery chain(s) through which instructional materials will be distributed to the classroom; and the necessary action steps, sequence, and roles and responsibilities. The plan also identifies key milestones and a feedback loop that will allow the working group to monitor implementation progress. It is now time to address the next essential element in the transition to the CCSS — crafting a way to launch high-quality professional development around the new standards and related assessments.

NOTES

6. TAKE ACTION

Implementation Action II

Train Educators on the Common Core State Standards and Related Assessments

Part of IMPLEMENTING Common Core State Standards and Assessments

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

To download the full workbook, go to www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook

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IN THIS SECTION

6. Implementation Action II: Train Educators on the Common Core State Standards and Related Assessments

Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- Does the system have clear strategies to train educators on the scope, sequence and expectations of the Common Core State Standards?
- How will mathematics and English language arts teachers receive this training?
- What information and feedback loops will be used to monitor whether instructional practice changes?

Teachers have to adjust their practice if students are to succeed on new assessments of the content expectations in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Professional development — defined as the time and money diverted to increasing the knowledge and skills of teachers and school leaders — can be a powerful mechanism to improve instructional practice.[1] State and district leaders recognize that massive and widespread efforts are needed to provide highly effective and cost-efficient professional development on the CCSS.

Yet the history of this effort in our country indicates that states and districts alike have fallen short. Professional development is often fragmented and episodic and rarely focuses on the actions that can truly affect student achievement in the long term. Too often, such training is still delivered in a one-time workshop without follow-up or support.[2]

The picture of teacher professional learning in the United States is decidedly mixed. While the percentage of teachers who participate in training on subject matter content and classroom management increased slightly from 2004 to 2008, the intensity of this training has actually decreased over the same time period.[3] When compared to high-performing countries, the United States lags far behind in providing teachers access to the extended learning and collaborative communities shown to improve practice.[4]

This lag is despite massive state and federal resources having been allocated for professional development. In 2009 alone, more than 40 percent of the $3 billion allocation of federal Title II funds was targeted specifically for the professional development of teachers. Limited capacity and little evaluation data have undermined state aspirations to maximize this investment.[5] **Transitioning to the CCSS provides the ideal opportunity to rethink how educators are trained on the new standards and related assessments.**

A second working group should be tasked with this effort. Specifically, the working group should consider how an effective professional development *system* can help change instructional practice. What actions can your state undertake that improve the return on this considerable investment and realize the promise of the CCSS? States should work to identify high-capacity districts capable of piloting efforts in front of statewide implementation. Taking the time to craft a *delivery plan* will help the working group identify exactly how professional development occurs across the state. The delivery plan should be iterative, and evidence from student work should constantly inform adjustments to professional development.

Draft the Delivery Plan: Prioritizing the Reform Strategy

What is your strategy for ensuring that all educators have high-quality professional development that helps them become practitioners of the new standards? Emerging consensus describes the features of professional learning needed to increase teachers' knowledge and skills and change classroom practice. According to the research literature, effective professional development is "ongoing, intensive, and connective to practice and school initiatives; focuses on the teaching and learning of specific academic content; and builds strong working relationships among teachers. When teachers receive 50 hours or more of a high-quality approach per year, student test scores rise by an average of 21 percentage points."[6] Moreover, effective professional development does not take away from instructional time. The National Staff Development Council's standards for staff development reinforce these findings and provide the working group several important design principles.[7]

Rethinking educator training also means examining the *system* in which professional development occurs. A well-designed professional development system allocates scarce resources to the most important priorities in ways most likely to raise student achievement.[8] What does this look like in practice? It begins with a **concrete understanding of the available resources and kind of professional development most likely to improve student performance.** It also means that leaders can **identify the state's or district's student learning priorities and isolate the exact level** (whole elementary schools or teachers of English language learners) **and content area** (8th grade mathematics) **to target support.** As teacher and leader evaluation results come on line, these data should become central to shaping the professional development effort.

Delivery Plans

"The plan is nothing. The planning is everything."
— Dwight Eisenhower

The delivery plan provides a road map for how the implementation should proceed. This important operational tool is a work in progress, and there is no such thing as a perfect plan. A good delivery plan begins with the end in mind, linking the purpose of the plan (training educators) to the overall vision for the system (improved student learning outcomes).

Unlike a typical strategic plan, the delivery plan should connect three primary components: the prioritized reform strategies, relevant delivery chains and expected impact on key outcome metrics. The plan should also meet the following criteria. It should:

- **Assign leadership, management and accountability** for the plan owner and project managers (e.g., those responsible for major strategies or activities).
- **Detail performance management,** such as key indicators that can be used to monitor the impact of the plan more regularly or implementation milestones to track implementation progress.
- **Describe the resources and support required** for the plan's success.
- **Prepare to manage stakeholders and users** by providing a thoughtful engagement strategy.
- **Anticipate and prepare for risks** that might throw the work off course, with particular attention given to how implementation can go awry.

You can learn more about creating delivery plans here.

Two tools can help the working group pinpoint the needs of the teaching force: First, the **gap analysis** can identify which grade spans, content areas or curriculum strands need immediate attention. Second, **carefully considering district capacity** can help the state leverage the work of leading districts as well as target additional resources to struggling districts.

Differentiating among districts is particularly important to the design of a good professional development system. After all, those districts that demonstrate steady gains in student achievement most likely already have successful professional development systems in place. Here, regional support structures, state learning networks and electronic means can share these lessons learned with other districts across the state. Elsewhere, however, the state may need to target limited resources and directly inject capacity into struggling districts via contracts, large-scale gatherings and focused partnerships with professional organizations. Finally, in those districts unwilling to engage in this work, the state may need to directly stimulate demand among principals for effective professional development aligned to the CCSS.

Your task then is to prioritize those activities most likely to help your system achieve its vision for how educators are trained. **You can learn more about prioritizing reform strategies *here*.** To identify the right set of high-impact activities, the working group should discuss the following questions:

- **Based on your gap analysis, what areas of professional development should you focus on?** Which grade spans and content areas will form the cornerstone of your professional development strategy?
- **How is professional development delivered today?** There are myriad providers of professional development in most states. What is the current "market share" — by both volume and funding — of the state agency? Textbook publishers and other vendors? School districts or schools? Nonprofits and other nongovernmental groups?
- **What are your standards for high-quality professional development in your areas of focus?** Are you able to concretely define your state's expectations for professional development that will help teachers implement the CCSS? These expectations will be important for helping you regulate the quality of professional development.
- **Based on those standards, where is high-quality professional development currently located?** To what extent are some or all of your identified providers currently providing expert professional development that is congruent with your areas of focus and of sufficient quality? Are there high-capacity districts whose practices could be shared? Trusted vendors that do reliable work? By contrast, are there some areas where the new professional development will need to be created from scratch? Every state's landscape will be different, so it will be important for you to understand yours.
- **Who will you lean on most heavily to develop the right professional development offerings?** There are several options for providers, including the state itself, regional structures, districts and third parties. You should strive to build a balanced portfolio of providers that can be trusted to deliver high-quality professional development at scale. A number of considerations must be taken into account, including:
    - Past performance according to your standards for professional development;
    - Potential for future performance; and
    - Ability to reach the field with scale (see the following sections on delivery chains for more information).
- **What is your preferred model for ensuring that your primary providers develop and promulgate high-quality professional development at scale for your areas of focus?** The figure on the next page offers one way to think about this question and some levers at your disposal. At their most basic level, these considerations involve how you regulate entry into, activity in and exit from the "market" of professional development provision. As the figure shows, the levers for doing this vary depending on the players you ultimately choose to work with: State-provided professional development, for example, can be regulated through your direct management of your

agency, while thoughtfully using the contract and grant structure may be required to manage other players. The means by which you monitor existing providers should be the common denominator: Holding all providers to a single standard of performance can serve as the basis for either retaining or replacing them.

- **What role do you need principals to play?** The principal holds the key to determining whether teachers in the school actively participate and engage in the professional development offerings. What actions can the state or school district take so that principals become key partners in this reform effort?

By answering these questions, you will essentially develop a statewide model for the creation of high-quality professional development offerings. This model can serve as a guide for how you prioritize your system's strategies for teacher professional development.

Considerations and Potential Levers for Regulating the Quality of Professional Development

	How will you identify and support high-quality or promising providers?	How will you monitor quality for current providers?	How will you exit providers that are not performing?
State	• Manage relevant agency staff • Identify potential partners for in-house development	• Create a standard feedback system and performance expectations for all professional development providers	• Manage relevant agency staff • Replace state offerings with others
Regional structures, districts and third parties	• Use existing networks or conduct a search to identify best practices • Redirect state funds to best practice providers through contracts or competitive grants • Condition funding on adherence to standards and scalability		• Maintain multiple trusted providers to reduce dependency on any one source • End contracts where expectations are not met • Re-run competitive grant competitions on a regular cycle

CASE STORY: KENTUCKY

The guiding vision for Kentucky's professional development approach to implementing the CCSS is that *"[e]very school district in the Commonwealth of Kentucky has a knowledgable and cohesive leadership team that guides the professional learning and practice of all administrators, teachers, and staff so that every student experiences highly effective teaching, learning, and assessment practices in every classroom, every day."* The cornerstone of this work resides with a system of Leadership Networks charged with building capacity at the district level, understanding the standards and the implications for instruction and assessment, exploring best practices for implementation in their own district or school, and creating a professional learning community that allows for collaboration across the state. Each network is facilitated by content consultants, field specialists from the Kentucky Department of Education, higher education representatives, and either an educational cooperative consultant or a district-level content specialist. To learn more about the Leadership Networks, visit the ***Kentucky Department of Education website***.

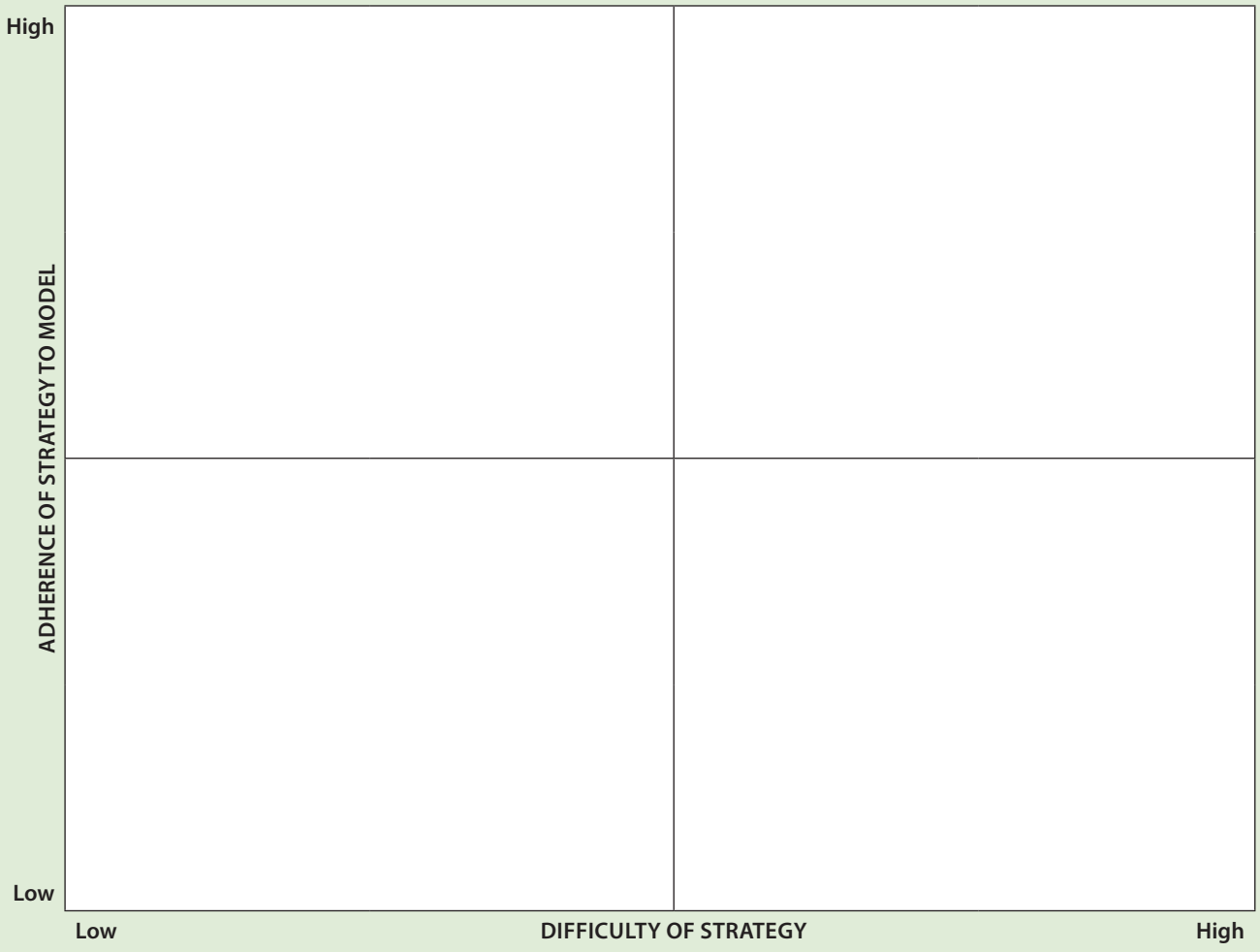
EXERCISE: IDENTIFY YOUR REFORM STRATEGIES FOR TRAINING EDUCATORS

Purpose: To articulate your prioritized reform strategy. With options from your own state and from this workbook in hand, narrow the list and choose those activities that will have the greatest impact.

Who should participate? The working group for professional development should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Brainstorm the strategies you will use to ensure that all educators are trained in the use of the CCSS. These can include both changes to current system activities and the creation of new system activities. Consider that your strategies may be different for high-capacity districts and low-capacity districts.
2. Plot your strategies on the 2 x 2 matrix below. Place the strategies that adhere more to your preferred model in the top half of the matrix, with those that adhere less on the bottom. For example, if you have decided to pursue a regional-led approach to creating professional development offerings, a strategy to create these offerings in the agency itself would be placed in the bottom half of the matrix. Then, arrange your strategies from left to right according to how difficult they will be to implement.
3. Finally, select a small set of prioritized strategies from among the ones you have just mapped. Choose from the upper half of the matrix to ensure adherence to your chosen model, and select a range of difficulty levels so that you have both quick wins and long-term work in your strategy set.



Draft the Delivery Plan: Determine the Delivery Chain(s)

It is now time to think about how professional development efforts will reach educators. Again, at the heart of your approach is the concept of a **delivery chain,** which helps force clarity about how a reform strategy is expected to roll out. The delivery chain is the set of actors, and the relationships among them, through which the activities you have chosen will be implemented. The delivery chain for training educators answers one question at its core: Starting from the intent of state leaders and ending with the desired change in behavior on the front line (teachers improving their practice based on the new professional development), how — and through whom — will professional development actually happen? ***You can learn more about delivery chain analysis here.***

In crafting a statewide model for high-quality professional development, you have already begun this analysis by constructing the delivery chain from your agency to the relevant provider(s) — which may, in some cases, be just the state agency itself. Now you will complete the analysis by determining the chain through which knowledge and feedback is transferred from providers to educators.

You have several options for ensuring that professional development reaches the right educators. The specific shape of your delivery chain matters less than whether you (1) have a well-articulated delivery chain and (2) have confidence that it will get the job done. Well-established means of delivering professional development may already exist and can be expanded or leveraged. As you draw the delivery chain, consider the many avenues through which educators now participate in professional development. It may be helpful to further categorize these as **direct** and **indirect** activities. What percentage of each professional development activity can the state influence?

Educators participate in professional development provided *directly* from:	Educators participate in professional development provided *indirectly* via:
• The state education agency	• Electronic/virtual means
• Regional structures	• Professional organizations
• School districts	• Intermediary organizations
• Vendors	• Train-the-trainer models

The choice of delivery chain may well be influenced by your model for professional development. A state-led model has very different implications for implementation from one in which best practices are identified and expanded through the marketplace. As you construct your delivery chain, you may find that the realities you discover influence your choice of model, even as your choice of model influences the chain. Allow your team to iterate between these two important questions until they arrive at a solution that is right for your state.

Once you have identified your delivery chain, it is important to probe for areas of potential weakness. Questions to consider:

- **Individual relationships:** What is the quality of personal relationships among critical actors? Where are the areas of strongest (e.g., line authority) and weakest (e.g., entirely reliant on persuasion) leverage?
- **Complexity:** How many actors are involved in the delivery chain? How easy or difficult is coordinating these actors to get something done?
- **Funding flows:** What are the major sources of funding and resources? Who controls these flows, and in which direction(s) do they go?

- **Feedback loops:** What mechanisms are in place to help us know what is happening on the ground? How will you know that the desired change is occurring at the other end of the delivery chain?
- **Choke points:** Are there particular actors that you disproportionately depend on to get something done?

To the extent that you find weaknesses, your plan must lay out the ways in which you intend to address them. In some cases, this may mean strengthening relationships in the delivery chain, perhaps by borrowing from the practices of your strongest existing relationships. In some cases, it can mean redesigning the chain entirely — usually with the aim of simplifying it, removing unnecessary actors or easing the pressure on overburdened ones.

CASE STORY: COLORADO

Though the history of professional development in Colorado is one of local control and independent providers, the Colorado Department of Education has increasingly turned to regulation and incentives to drive instructional improvement. For example, all districts must now provide a state-approved induction program for beginning teachers. The department's ***Read to Achieve*** program allocates $99 million in tobacco funds to improve instruction in early elementary school classrooms with below average student literacy and comprehension skills. Additional state and federal funds that flow to school districts are differentiated to support educators whose needs are identified through performance evaluations. This range of targeted support and pressure helps maximize professional learning opportunities in the state given limited resources.

Resources to Support CCSS and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Implementation

Educator Leader Cadres

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Educator Leader Cadres (ELCs) are intended to be an integral part of state CCSS professional development plans in several ways.

- First, states should consider the cadres as one strategy for **providing professional development** to educators in their districts. The ELC meetings will be planned as professional development for those who attend.
- Second, the ELCs will provide the vehicle for **additional professional development** to occur. Through the ELC meetings, cadre members will have an opportunity to discuss, strategize and problem solve ways the cadres can help build capacity at the state, district and school levels. Cadre members will be given the tools they need to lead and facilitate ongoing professional development with their peers in coordination with the state implementation plan.
- Third, between the ELC meetings, states can convene their cadres to have **continued dialogue about state and local implementation** and learn firsthand about school and district professional development needs. The cadre's leadership will help prepare states, districts and schools for sustained implementation by working to build deep expertise in the CCSS and PARCC.

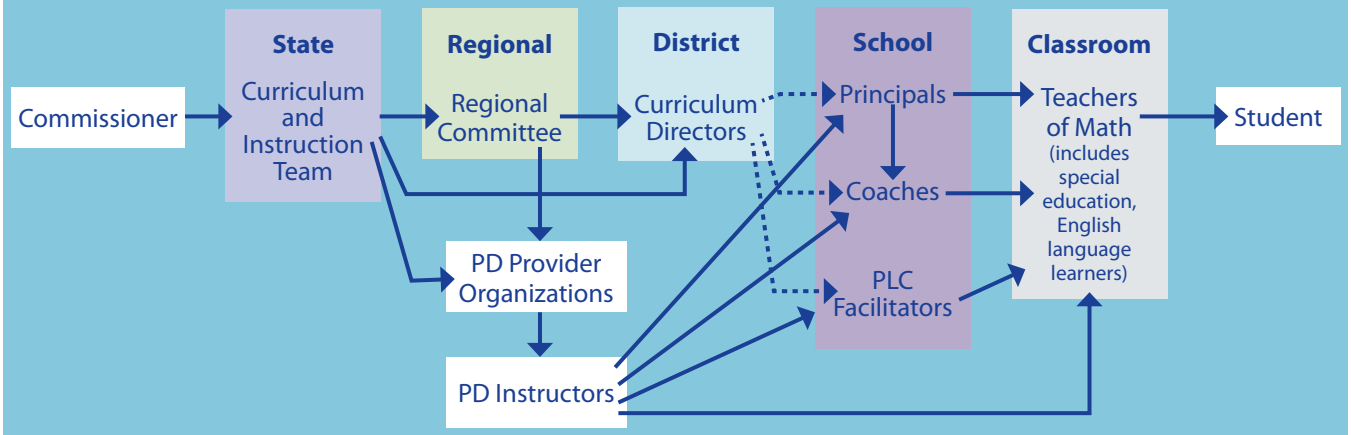
See the "Resources To Support CCSS and PARCC Implementation" box in Chapter 5 to read about the ELCs' role in aligning instructional materials. To read more about the ELCs, visit the PARCC website.

Model Instructional Units

PARCC will be developing materials to help educators across the state better understand issues of quality and alignment of instructional materials to the CCSS. Designed as electronically available professional development modules, these materials can provide a centerpiece for professional development activities at the local level, allowing for a cost-effective and efficient mode of professional development across the state. *See the "Resources To Support CCSS and PARCC Implementation" box in Chapter 5 to read about how these tools can be used for aligning instructional materials.*

Delivery Chains: From the Classroom Perspective

One easy way to think about the complexity of a delivery chain is to think about it from the perspective of the teacher whose changed classroom practice is a critical measure of the impact of your strategy. For example, consider the delivery chain for middle school mathematics professional development (PD) that one state in the PARCC created:



A few key questions tease out potential issues:

- How many different inputs are there? The figure shows that the teacher may be receiving PD from principals, coaches and professional learning community (PLC) facilitators in schools or directly from PD instructors hired at a regional level.
- To what extent are these inputs coordinated? There are two types of coordination to consider:
  - **Aggregate coordination** means that multiple inputs apply to the same teacher but they reinforce the same message or work. For example, if there is one agreed-upon PD course for middle school math teachers, and all four of these inputs are teaching the same thing, it may be helpful for a teacher to receive information from multiple sources. When aggregate coordination fails, there is the risk of either overloading or annoying the teacher with duplicative PD offerings.
  - **Complementary coordination** means either that the different inputs apply to different teachers or that the messages of inputs to the same teacher complement one another. For example, principals, coaches and PLC facilitators are likely to coordinate their efforts within a given school. Outside PD instructors might be brought in only for schools with a teacher workforce that is seriously struggling and needs additional help. When complementary coordination fails, some teachers may have too many touchpoints while others have none at all.

If the view from the classroom is not clear, your delivery chain likely is overly complex.

Sometimes the delivery chain needs to be completely redesigned. The state does not have to treat all districts the same. Often, leading districts have already designed strong professional development approaches that the state can leverage by creating a learning network. Similarly, low-capacity districts may need more targeted support from the state, region, vendor or professional organizations. Redesigning the delivery chain requires a clear assessment of the problem and a willingness to test new approaches.

EXERCISE: MAP THE DELIVERY CHAIN FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Purpose: To draw a delivery chain for professional development, identify the weaknesses in it and identify solutions to address those weaknesses.

Who should participate? The working group for professional development should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. For the overall professional development strategy, list the key actors in your ideal delivery chain — the ones who will be a critical part of ensuring that educators get the training they need. Think of actors at five levels: state, region (if applicable), district, school and classroom. In addition to recording which actors are involved, please note how many of each there are in your state (e.g., 100 superintendents, 1,000 principals, etc.) Keep the following questions in mind:
    a. What, if any, professional development will be delivered by the state agency?
    b. What professional development will be delivered by districts?
    c. What professional development will be created by regional centers or third parties?
    d. To what extent and in what ways is professional development affected by other actors in the chain?
    e. Will the delivery chain be different for high- and low-capacity districts? (You may need two variations.)
    f. Will the delivery chain be different for the various activities in your strategy?
2. Draw the single, more important line of influence between the system leader and the student, and articulate how you would like it to function. Some questions to keep in mind:
    a. What options are available to the state?
    b. What are we (at the state level) particularly good at?
    c. What historical lessons have we learned in rolling out prior professional development?
3. Identify and draw secondary lines to other actors who need to be involved.
4. On the delivery chain, identify the feedback loop — the method you will use to identify whether or not implementation is working.
5. Identify potential weaknesses in the delivery chain and the ways you will address them. Use the worksheet template on the next page.

Delivery chain analysis of weaknesses and solutions worksheet

	Potential weaknesses	Potential solutions
Individual relationships		
Complexity		
Funding flows		
Feedback loops		
Choke points		
Other		

Draft the Delivery Plan: Connecting Activities to Expected Outcomes

Implementation planning typically ends once planned professional development activities have begun. Yet equal attention is needed to ensure that classroom instruction *actually changes*. Is the professional development sufficiently aligned to the CCSS and of value? How are these lessons being used? What impact are they having on classroom teaching and student learning? To answer these questions, the working group should connect activities to their expected outcomes and create or leverage the feedback loops in the delivery chain to track impact.

The first step is to identify a clear **timeline** of when planned activities need to occur. Sequencing the key deliverables will show when the benefits of the activities will be felt in the field. A "deliverable" is a milestone or end product for an activity. For example, if the state plans to provide low-performing districts with CCSS coaches, a deliverable might be that all the curriculum directors in these districts have received this resource by a certain date. Tracking whether these deliverables are met is an important first step to ensuring that the necessary work occurs.

Next, articulate the **success measures** that you want to track. Consider the impact you expect to achieve by launching the professional development effort. This will help you decide how to measure success and whether this level of impact is sufficient. What might this look like? If the right professional development offerings occur, and if principals and teachers participate in them, their practice will improve, and student learning will be affected. Four potential types of success measures follow from this logic:

- **Alignment:** To what extent are principals and teachers participating in professional development that is aligned to the state's models? Potential metrics include the number of providers that provide aligned professional development or the number of participants (teachers and principals) in professional development of any kind that is provided by an aligned provider.
- **User satisfaction:** To what extent do principals and teachers who participate in aligned professional development find it to be helpful in aiding student learning on the new CCSS? The potential metric in this area would be a user satisfaction survey for principals and teachers.
- **Classroom practice:** To what extent do teachers participating in aligned professional development change their practices? Potential metrics include self-reporting of changed practice by teachers who participate in aligned professional development (versus those who do not) or observations of teacher behavior for a sample of classrooms that do and do not participate in aligned professional development, either observed directly or reported by principals.
- **Impact on student outcomes:** To what extent do principals and teachers participating in aligned professional development achieve better results for their students? Potential metrics include formative or summative assessment data, comparing teachers who participate in aligned professional development with those who do not.

At the highest level, these success measures are outcome oriented. At the most basic, they are process oriented. Both types of success measures, and the intermediate metrics that connect them, demonstrate your system's theory of action for how the prioritized activities will actually result in real impact. Making this connection is hard work, and there will be disagreements about what to measure. However, without having the difficult conversations on this topic, you will not have a true compass to know if your activities are being selected or executed to influence the things you care most about.

You may also need to design **new mechanisms for data collection.** Some examples include requiring professional development providers to submit certain data on participation to the state agency, conducting audits of professional development providers to check fidelity, adding questions to an existing teacher working conditions survey, developing an online teacher/principal survey and creating incentives for participation, using technology to conduct some observations, building mechanisms for data collection into new teacher evaluation systems, and linking teacher identification to professional development activity to use student performance results to gauge the impact of professional development that teachers received. The feedback loops you have identified in the delivery chain exercise should get you part or all of the way there — and in the end, this discussion will also influence how those feedback loops are designed.

Finally, you will want to **set targets.** Consider what you want the overall impact on student outcomes to be as new professional development occurs. To get that level of impact, how strong will your alignment, user satisfaction and changes in classroom practice have to be? If you hit the milestones in your timeline, what impact will that have on the success metrics? How should you see them move over time? Now that you have articulated your success metrics, activities and implementation timeline, it is time to put them together to estimate the impact of these activities over time. The resulting trajectory will help you monitor progress over the next several years and will give you an early indication of whether you are on track to achieve your desired results.

Like the discussion about success metrics, this one will be challenging. Trying to estimate the future is uncomfortable, especially when you are accountable for it. Moreover, the various components are interdependent: Your expected impact over time is based on your selection of success metrics and activities, but your selection of activities may in turn be influenced by a need to achieve the targets you have set. Two things are worth bearing in mind:

- The estimate of impact over time is a *guideline* for you, not a hard prediction. The real purpose of the estimate is to compare it to what actually happens and use the differential to drive any mid-course corrections. It is not to create additional accountability with consequences.
- Revisiting prior discussions is good, and even necessary, at this stage. Activities, success metrics and impact over time are interdependent variables. As you discuss one, it makes sense to revise and refine the other two until you have a balance that represents an ambitious but realistic plan for real progress.

EXERCISE: CREATE A TIMELINE OF DELIVERABLES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Purpose: To create a specific sequence of activities and deliverables for ensuring that all educators receive professional development that will allow them to become practitioners of the new standards.

Who should participate? The working group for professional development should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Think through the prioritized activities and the delivery chain you drew, and create a list of the deliverables for CCSS-related professional development for which the state will be responsible.
2. If any deliverables already have hard dates associated with them, place those in the appropriate place in the template below.
3. Use the template below to create a timeline for the other deliverables between now and 2015. Prioritize, where necessary, based on the impact you have already identified. The model timeline in Chapter 3 can aid your thinking.

Deliverables by year and quarter

Activity					
2012	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2013	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2014	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2015	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				

EXERCISE: SET SUCCESS METRICS AND TARGETS

Purpose: To set metrics and targets for your activities so you can assess success according to the feedback loop.

Who should participate? The working group for professional development should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Determine how you will measure success in terms of alignment, user satisfaction, classroom practice and impact on student outcomes, and record this in the Metrics column in the template below.
2. Next, identify specific, numerical targets you aim to achieve, based on the metrics you established. Record these in the Targets column in the template below.
3. Finally, identify the mechanism(s) through which you will collect these data. Record this in the Data Collection Mechanism(s) column in the template below.

	Metrics	Targets	Data collection mechanism(s)
Alignment			
User satisfaction			
Classroom practice			
Impact on student outcomes			

EXERCISE: ESTIMATE IMPACT OVER TIME

Purpose: To connect planned activities to success metrics and targets to create a trajectory of estimated impact over time.

Who should participate? The working group for professional development should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. For each of your success metrics, create a baseline by estimating what the current level is (where possible). Can you audit existing professional development offerings for alignment? Do you have current surveys of teacher and principal satisfaction with professional development that you can use? What do you know about the relevant student outcome measures? Make the best estimate that you can — it will not be perfect because many of these input measures are new.
2. Connect the key deliverables to the impact you expect your selected activities to have. Specifically, given the timing of the deliverables you have previously identified, consider the potential impact on alignment, user satisfaction, classroom practice and student outcome metrics. Designate impact on each measure in each time period as "zero," "low," "medium" or "high," and record this on the template on the next page.
3. Assign a value to the "low," "medium" or "high" categories, and calculate the expected numerical impact on each of your success metrics. Does this picture look plausible? Are there areas where you overshoot or undershoot? Are there assumptions underlying your estimates that need to change?

Impact on success measure by year and quarter: Success measure 1

Metric		Alignment	User satisfaction	Classroom practice	Impact on student outcomes
2012	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2013	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2014	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
2015	Q1				
	2				
	3				
	4				

Conclusion

You should now have a road map for how high-quality professional development can help educators across the state align their instructional practice to the expectations in the CCSS. The plan considers what success in 2014–15 will look like; key activities and the delivery chain(s) through which the professional development will be provided; and the necessary action steps, sequence, and roles and responsibilities. The plan also identifies key milestones and a feedback loop that will allow the working group to monitor implementation progress. It is now time to plan for the transition of your state's technology and assessment system to ensure that your schools are prepareed to administer the new assessment.

ENDNOTES

1 Hawley Miles (Summer 2003). *The Big Picture: A Systems Perspective.* National Staff Development Council. Volume 24, No. 3.

2 Hirsch, Koppich & Knapp (1998). *What States Are Doing To Improve the Quality of Teaching: A Brief Review of Current Patterns and Trends.* Seattle: The Center for the Student of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington.

3 Wei, Darling-Hammond & Adamson (2010). *Professional Development in the United States: Trends and Challenges.* Palo Alto: Stanford University.

4 Jaquith, Mindich, Wei & Darling-Hammond (2010). *Teacher Professional Learning in the United States: Summary Report.* Palo Alto: Stanford University.

5 Ibid.

6 Jaquith, Mindich, Wei & Darling-Hammond (2009). *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession.* Palo Alto: Stanford University.

7 Professional development must comprise professional learning that (1) is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards as well as related local educational agency and school improvement goals; (2) is conducted among educators at the school and facilitated by well-prepared school principals and/or school-based professional development coaches, mentors, master teachers or other teacher leaders; (3) primarily occurs several times per week among established teams of teachers, principals and other instructional staff members such that the teams of educators engage in a continuous cycle of improvement that (i) evaluates student, teacher and school learning needs through a thorough review of data on teacher and student performance and (ii) defines a clear set of educator learning goals based on the rigorous analysis of the data.

8 Hawley Miles (Summer 2003). *The Big Picture.*

NOTES

7. TAKE ACTION

Implementation Action III

Transition Technology and Assessment System

Part of **IMPLEMENTING Common Core State Standards and Assessments**

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

To download the full workbook, go to www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook

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IN THIS SECTION

7. Implementation Action III: Transition Technology and Assessment System

Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- Has your system defined what "ready" looks like in terms of technology preparedness?
- Do you have data about where the gaps in readiness exist?
- How will you ensure that all districts receive the information and support they need to close gaps in technology readiness ahead of the assessment?

In preparing all students for college and career readiness, schools and districts must provide students the 21st century skills they will need to be successful in this increasingly global, technology-driven world. Providing these skills will require a **broad transformation in the culture of many schools as they become true digital learning environments** where technology is integrated into all parts of the school experience, including instruction and assessment. Making this transition happen for all students in all grade levels may be one of the largest challenges you face as you implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and assessments. Though the challenge seems daunting, you can do a lot now to plan for the transition and **begin assessing gaps and identifying areas for improvement.**

Your strategic implementation team should work closely with technology leaders at the state level to identify a state readiness team that will be responsible for this work. One of the first steps will be to identify gaps in readiness and craft a definition of what "ready" looks like in your state. From there, you can segment districts based on their level of need and assign responsibility for ensuring that each is ready in time. Taking the time to do this analysis and planning up front, and creating mechanisms to check on progress along the way, will ensure that your state is prepared to implement the assessment in 2014–15. As you read the chapter, keep in mind that much of the specific information, particularly around exact recommended specifications of devices required for the assessment, may not yet be known, so you may need to come back to certain exercises as more information becomes available.

While much of this chapter focuses on ensuring that the schools in your state have the necessary infrastructure and devices to deliver online assessments, this effort must take place in the context of a **new focus on instruction that leverages digital learning tools** to ensure that students have access to the full range of the CCSS. This new focus calls for a change in both instruction and assessments. Your state readiness team should also consider and address the interoperability of data and reporting systems, although this is not detailed directly in this chapter.

Getting Started: Assessing Current Gaps

An analysis of your gaps in readiness is a critical starting point for your effort. Every school must address four main areas to ensure at least minimum readiness by the time testing begins:

- **Infrastructure:** What is the maximum number of test-takers per session that can be supported with current configurations — including facilities for administering tests and other infrastructure (e.g., computer lab capacities, electrical power supplies, availability of mobile cart for carrying devices)?
- **Network:** What is the maximum number of test-takers per session that can be supported with the current levels of Internet connectivity, including network bandwidth and wireless coverage?
- **Devices:** How many devices at the school meet minimum requirements to administer the test? What is the maximum number of test-takers per session that can be supported with this number of devices?
- **Staff and personnel:** How many staff in the school have been trained to administer, troubleshoot and provide appropriate security for the tests? (Note that parameters for such training will be available in 2013, when the test delivery platform is developed.) What is the maximum number of test-takers per session that these trained staff can support?

For each of these areas, it is possible to measure a single indicator of readiness: **Given the number of scheduled testing sessions at the school, what percentage of eligible test-takers will the school be able to test within the state's (or district's or school's) testing window?** The challenge in each state will be to get this number to 100 percent for every area of readiness, in every school.

While these are the minimum areas of readiness, they may not be the only considerations. Depending on your state's policy environment — especially regarding regulations and requirements for testing — there may be other definitions of readiness that your team will need to define as clearly as the items on the list above. Changing some of your state's regulations and requirements to make implementation easier over the next several years may make sense. Similarly, instructional practices are critical to consider to ensure that students have adequate opportunities to use relevant technologies as part of their learning prior to encountering them in a testing scenario. If your policies and practices will need to be changed, you may want to consider additional categories beyond those above, so you can create plans for removing or managing these barriers.

Assessing Gaps: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers/Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Readiness Tool

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is collaborating with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) to develop a tool for assessing districts' current level of technology readiness. The tool will be available beginning in March 2012, with five testing windows every spring and fall until 2014. The tool will allow districts to automatically capture information from the computers on which it is run to determine whether they meet the minimum specifications for the assessments. The tool will also request that districts provide a certain amount of information via survey about their network capacity, devices and specifications, staff and personnel knowledge, and testing configuration at each school.

This tool will give state systems detailed information on three of the four areas of readiness: network, devices, and staff and personnel. It will then automatically generate reports at the school, district and state levels that show the percentage of eligible test-takers that can be supported in each area. It will also break down the components of readiness in each area. For example, for device readiness, it will show the number of devices that meet requirements, the resulting device-to-test-taker ratio, the number of sessions per day and the number of days in the testing window to show the percentage of eligible test-takers that can be tested with current devices during the testing window. This information will allow leaders at the school, district and state levels to pinpoint the changes that can or should be made to bring each school to 100 percent readiness.

PARCC Proposed Technology Guidelines

PARCC has proposed the following minimum recommended hardware specifications. These specifications are meant to be used as guidelines for states and districts to evaluate existing hardware and plan instructional technology purchases in the near future that will meet assessment requirements. Confirmed specifications requirements will be released soon.

Minimum:

- 1.0 GHz processor speed
- 1 GB RAM
- 1 GB available memory/storage
- 1024 x 768 resolution
- 10" min display size
- Input devices must include the ability to enter text and to interact and manipulate virtual objects.
- Audio and video support will be required.

For many states, the tool may be sufficient to gather the necessary data for implementation (this will be particularly true in states that have already satisfied infrastructure requirements and have no additional state-specific requirements). If your state has additional requirements that need to be tested at each school, you will need to develop an additional instrument or instruments to complement the PARCC/SBAC readiness tool. For example, state regulations may require certain room setups or stricter protocols for testing security. If you do not feel you have the necessary information to determine readiness in these areas, you may need to conduct an additional survey or interviews with each school or district.

Using Readiness Data

Once you have completed your gap analysis, you can use the resulting data to **determine the size of the gap** that needs to be closed to reach 100 percent readiness (percentage of eligible test-takers that can be tested in the window) in each district.

You can break this information down in a "league table" of color-coded ratings of readiness for each district and each area. Producing such a table will require that you convert the readiness data into ratings; you might decide, for example, that those districts with less than 50 percent readiness would be rated red in your table, those between 50 percent and 90 percent would be rated yellow, and those above 90 percent would be rated green. This will help you to pinpoint which districts need further work and in what areas, as well as identify those districts that are leading the way and that might provide advice or guidance for others. Choose simple rules for ratings that will help you differentiate between districts that are already the most prepared and those that have the furthest yet to go.

Communications

Because your technology transition efforts herald a broader shift in the use of technology in both instruction and assessment at every school, your state needs to develop a **clear, coherent communications strategy for this work.** This should be a cross-agency effort, involving several leaders, including the chief information officer, communications director and head of assessment.

A number of key stakeholders will need to be engaged, including district superintendents and technology directors, school leaders, and teachers. Consider integrating communications into each of your necessary touch points. For example, when you are reaching out to schools and districts to assess current gaps, you can communicate with them about what is coming. Also think about the ways in which your team is already communicating with the field and consider using those opportunities to communicate about technology readiness, gaps and strategies to close them, as well as get feedback from local leaders and technology leaders.

Refer to Chapter 4 for more information on creating a communications plan.

Readiness League Table (EXAMPLE)

	Infrastructure	Network	Devices	Staff and personnel
District 1	98%	95%	93%	75%
District 2	60%	52%	92%	10%
District 3	91%	48%	60%	5%

Once you have identified the areas of strength and challenge for each district, you may then choose to **segment your districts based on their current areas of need.** The purpose of this exercise will be to identify the districts of highest need, districts that have the capacity to achieve readiness on their own and specific areas of need for those districts that you do not expect will achieve readiness on their own.

For example, some districts may need support in all four areas, some districts may need support in devices and knowledge only, and other districts may need support in training staff and personnel only. You might identify a segment of districts that you believe can achieve readiness on their own. Factors to consider when making these judgments include the number of technology personnel a district has, the technology budget or access to funding in a given district, and current technology initiatives in that district.

One key segment might be those districts that will be involved in field testing, as they will need to be ready a year ahead of your other districts. These districts should be representative of your student population, not just a group that is furthest along in readiness today.

Identifying one person from your readiness team responsible for each district or segment of districts will allow you to develop a coverage model for working with each to reach its target. Some districts will not need coverage at all, of course, if they are already deemed to be ready or on track to achieve readiness independently.

EXERCISE: SEGMENT YOUR DISTRICTS

Purpose: To divide your districts into manageable segments based on their similar qualities so that your team can better prepare to meet the needs of the various districts.

Who should participate? The state readiness team should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. With your league table in front of you, consider the current ratings of all of the districts in your state and create a segmentation that will help you meaningfully differentiate your treatment of them. Some factors to consider include:
   a. Area of greatest need: Where is the district's bottleneck to readiness?
      - Staff and personnel only?
      - Staff/personnel and devices?
      - Staff/personnel, devices and network?
      - All four categories?
   b. Capacity: How likely is it that the district will achieve readiness on its own? Consider:
      - The number of technology personnel in the district;
      - The district's budget for technology and/or access to technology funding; and
      - Current technology initiatives in the district that might improve existing the instructional technology.
   c. District size
   d. Inclusion (or not) in field testing

   Whatever your resulting segmentation, map it in a table like the 3 x 2 matrix below. In this example, the most important factors are area of greatest need and capacity, but infrastructure is not as much a concern.

CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE READINESS WITHOUT STATE ASSISTANCE	Staff/personnel only	Staff/personnel + devices	Staff/personnel + devices + network
High			
Low			

AREA OF GREATEST NEED

(continued on next page)

2. Place your districts on the map according to their individual characteristics. It may be helpful to use sticky cards or Post-its on chart paper, so you can move the districts around to the various segments during your conversation.
3. Complete the table below outlining each segment, identifying a person or persons responsible for ensuring that segment reaches 100 percent readiness and articulating an approach for reaching each one. Note that the final column will be easier to complete after thinking through your strategies and delivery chains, so you may want to revisit that column at the end of this chapter.

Segment	Criteria for putting districts into this segment	Districts in this segment	Person responsible	How should we reach them?

Filling Gaps: Possible Strategies

Given the budgetary challenges that most states and districts are facing today, **finding funding** to fill the gaps you have identified will likely be the most challenging aspect of moving every school to complete technology readiness.

Strategies for Filling Infrastructure, Network and Device Gaps

The main strategies around filling the gaps around infrastructure, network capacity and devices will depend on using various funding streams to purchase the relevant technologies. Several states have already begun to explore this issue, both in previous initiatives and in the context of the upcoming transition to the CCSS.

As you plan this transition, there is **an important connection to consider between instructional technology and assessment technology.** In the past, initiatives and funding streams for improving instructional technology have not fully addressed changing practice as part of an integrated system that includes pedagogy, instructional materials and assessments. The transition to computer-based testing should, ideally, be a driver that supports meaningful shifts toward technology-enhanced learning as well. Emphasizing that assessment-ready devices should not merely be used a few times a year during testing windows is important; rather, they should be a consistent part of each student's overall learning experience. To that end, one important source of potential funding is to piggyback the demand for assessment technology on existing funding streams that pay for instructional technology more broadly.

More generally, there are a number of strategies you should consider to fill these gaps:

- **Appropriating additional statewide funding:** Will the political and fiscal environment allow new money to be appropriated by the legislature? Is it necessary?
- **Redirecting existing statewide funding:** Is it possible to increase the flexibility of certain existing state funding streams to allow them to be spent on instructional and assessment technology? Can an existing instructional technology funding stream be repurposed to include assessment technology?

Delivery Plans

"The plan is nothing. The planning is everything."
— Dwight Eisenhower

Taking the time to draft a delivery plan around a specific goal (such as transitioning technology systems) will help your team gain clarity around what needs to be done and how you plan to get there. The delivery plan provides a road map for how the implementation should proceed. This important operational tool is a work in progress, and there is no such thing as a perfect plan. A good delivery plan begins with the end in mind, linking the purpose of the plan (transitioning technology systems) to the overall vision for the system (100 percent readiness).

Unlike a typical strategic plan, the delivery plan should connect three primary components: the prioritized reform strategies, relevant delivery chains and expected impact on key outcome metrics. The plan should also meet the following criteria. It should:

- **Assign leadership, management and accountability** for the plan owner and project managers (e.g., those responsible for major strategies or activities).
- **Detail performance management,** such as key indicators that can be used to monitor the impact of the plan more regularly or implementation milestones to track progress.
- **Describe the resources and support required** for the plan's success.
- **Prepare to manage stakeholders and users** by providing a thoughtful engagement strategy.
- **Anticipate and prepare for risks** that might throw the work off course, with particular attention given to areas of implementation most likely to deviate from plan.

You can learn more about creating delivery plans here.

- **Forming partnerships:** Is there a role for philanthropy or the business community to play? Can the state play a role in forging these partnerships or in matching high-need districts to particular partners?

Achieve will release a white paper in spring 2012 that will provide more examples and advice for states around using various funding sources to purchase devices or improve infrastructure. This document will be available on the Achieve website.

- **Facilitating procurement centrally:** Can the state set up purchasing programs that will allow districts and schools to purchase necessary equipment at discounted rates? Alternatively, can it facilitate the establishment of clusters of districts that make volume purchases? Can the data from your gap analysis be brought to bear to guarantee certain purchase volumes?
- **Working with districts to find funding:** Can the state focus on certain high-needs districts and assist them in strategizing to find or redirect additional funding?

CASE STORY: LOUISIANA

The Louisiana Department of Education has been working with districts to create contracts for procuring hardware, software and Internet connectivity to allow expanded regional or statewide procurements. The state has been researching various approaches, both in and out of state, to craft contracts and procurement processes to improve and expand private-sector service offerings, efficiencies and cost savings for PK–12 schools. Louisiana's PK–12 schools want the state to create centralized procurement mechanisms for acquiring private network and telecommunication services, hardware and software, deployment and management services, and support services while achieving savings similar to those enjoyed by Louisiana's education and government institutions. Louisiana's higher education institutions have saved more than $6 million annually and receive up to eight times more bandwidth services for their educational institutions than they would if they were to procure and contract these services individually. The PK–12 effort is expected to save districts and the state a significant amount of money over time with relatively modest support from the state.

CASE STORY: NEW YORK

In 2011, New York State Education Law was amended to provide flexibility to districts in the use of instructional materials aids, which include textbooks, library materials, computer software and instructional computer hardware. Under the new provisions, a school district may spend more than its maximum allocation in any one of the areas by drawing on available aid in the other categories (with the exception of library materials aid). The change allows schools to use portions of state textbook aid for instructional software and hardware purchases. These new provisions first apply to 2011–12 expenses for 2012–13 aids. You can find out more ***here.***

CASE STORY: RHODE ISLAND

As Rhode Island began planning for next-generation assessments, officials realized districts needed assistance to improve school infrastructure in two primary areas: securing sufficient bandwidth and building classroom infrastructure (e.g., sufficient number of electrical outlets, wireless access in classrooms, etc.). To help districts first address any classroom infrastructure concerns, state education officials have proposed a Technology Bond, which would invest $20 million over the next three years to improve classroom and building infrastructure. The Technology Bond is currently pending official inclusion in the governor's budget and, ultimately, legislative approval. There has been strong state leadership to prepare this proposal for the governor and legislative leaders and to make building technology infrastructure a priority in the state.

Strategies for Filling Knowledge Gaps for Staff and Personnel

To successfully transition to new assessments, you will need to provide training for existing staff. As you prepare for and design these trainings, there are a number of questions to consider to make the trainings relevant and effective:

- **Who needs to be trained?**
- **What content should be covered?**
- **How will you communicate about training opportunities and recruit participants?**
- **How can you connect this training to a broader and longer-term shift toward technology-based instruction?**
- **How can you coordinate these workshops with other professional development offerings related to the CCSS and the PARCC assessments? (For more on this topic, please see *Chapter 6* on professional development.)**

Particularly, consider the professional development provided to teachers around the assessment. This professional development will include not just training on administering the assessment but also a number of additional components, including changing classroom instruction to prepare students for this kind of assessment and using the data that come from the assessments to inform instruction. You will likely need to use a number of strategies to ensure that teachers and other staff are ready on each of these fronts. Possible strategies include:

- Creating new professional development offerings;
- Weaving these topics into existing professional development offerings;
- Creating online professional development modules;
- Drafting an in-depth but readable user guide with practical advice for administering the assessment;
- Providing a help desk for users administering the assessment; and
- Loaning staff from the state or between schools or districts to those schools or district that may not have sufficient technology staff capacity during the assessment window.

EXERCISE: IDENTIFY YOUR STRATEGIES FOR TRANSITIONING TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

Purpose: To articulate your prioritized strategies for filling gaps in technology or knowledge. With options from your own state and this workbook in hand, use this exercise to narrow the list of strategies and choose those that will have the greatest impact.

Who should participate? The state readiness team should complete this exercise.

Directions:

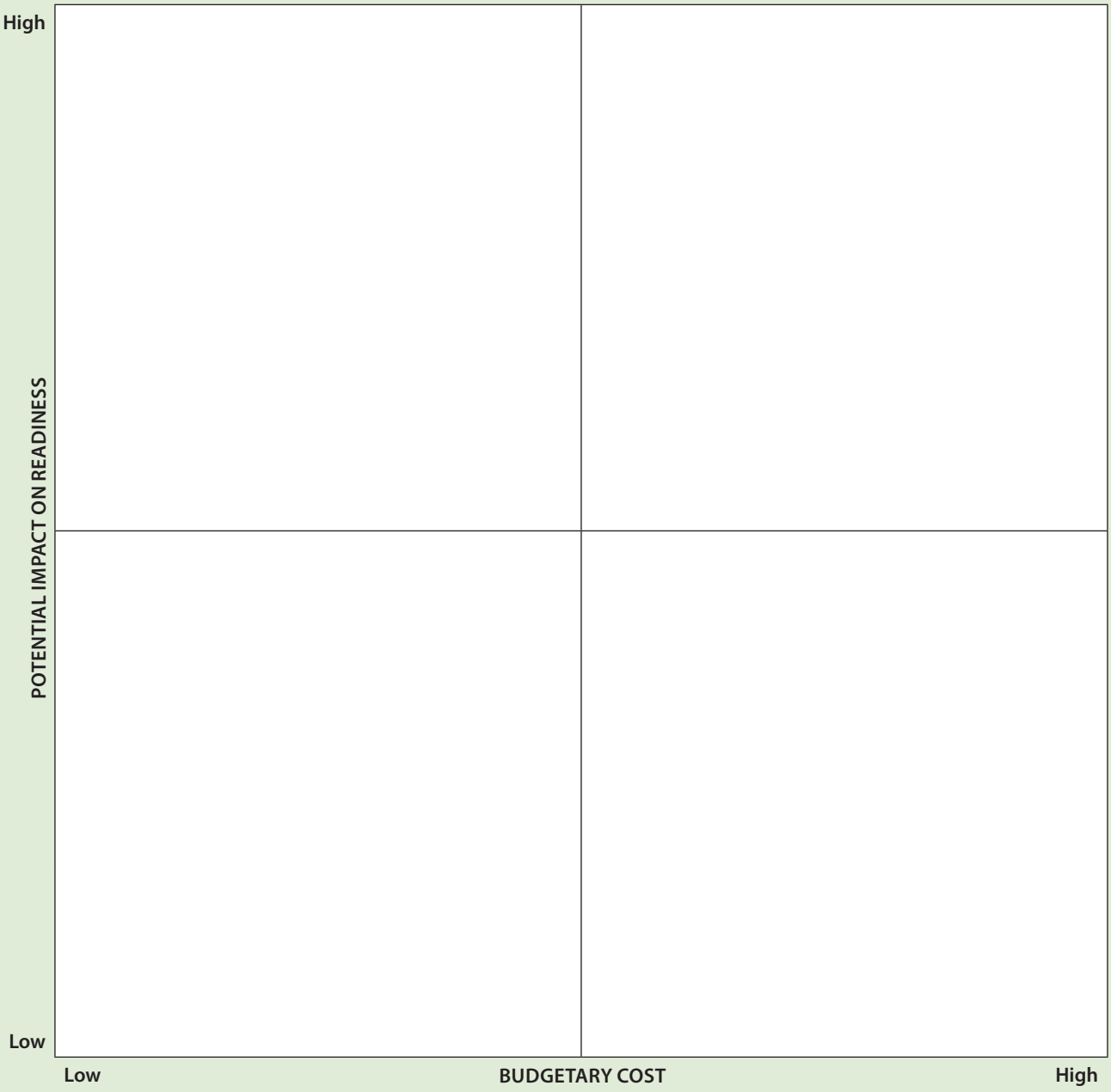
1. Brainstorm the strategies you will use to fill your identified gaps in infrastructure, network capacity, devices, or staff and personnel knowledge.
2. Use the template below to answer the following questions:
    a. To which segments (or districts) would this strategy apply?
    b. Which areas of readiness (infrastructure, network capacity, devices, or staff and personnel knowledge) would this strategy address?
    c. To what extent will this strategy address each area of readiness gap? For example, is the strategy going to get 100 percent of the targeted districts (or targeted segments of districts) to 100 percent readiness in that area of readiness? Or will you need to scale up that strategy or combine it with other strategies to reach 100 percent?

	To which segments (or districts) would this strategy apply?	Which areas of readiness would this strategy address?	To what extent will this strategy address each area of readiness gap?
Strategy 1			
Strategy 2			
Strategy 3			
Strategy 4			

2. Next, consider whether the strategies you have identified and the coverage you expect from each will match up with the needs you identified. If necessary, use a 2 x 2 matrix to prioritize those strategies. You may choose a number of criteria for each axis, depending on what matters most in your state. Some potential criteria include:

   a. Potential impact on total readiness;
   b. Budgetary cost;
   c. Degree of difficulty; and
   d. Capacity to implement.

   A sample matrix is given below:



Determining the Delivery Chain To Reach Every School

How will you ensure that every school is ready to administer the new computer-based assessments, and how will you help meet the needs of each school? To answer this question, the state readiness team must identify the delivery chain for reaching these schools. The delivery chain is the set of actors, and the relationships among them, through which the strategies you have chosen will be implemented. The delivery chain for technology readiness answers one core question: **Starting from the intent of state leaders to fill these gaps and ending with readiness on the front line, how — and through whom — will the transition support actually happen?**

To address this question, first map the chain for one strategy (or group of similar strategies) and one specific segment of districts. Repeat for other strategies and the segments to which they apply, building on your prior work where the chains are similar. Once you have done this for the relevant strategies and segments, step back and consider the map you have drawn for implementation in every district. What will be the overall impact on your staffing and budgetary resources at the state level? Is this feasible and sustainable? These questions may lead you to adjust your strategies and/or the delivery chains that you work through to implement them.

In your delivery chain, you will also establish potential additional venues for **feedback loops** on the quality of implementation. These feedback loops will allow you to receive two types of information that may be useful and are not provided by the readiness tool: (1) information on the quality of implementation of specific strategies and (2) information on areas such as staff/personnel knowledge and infrastructure that may be specific to your state and not picked up by the readiness tool (particularly in areas of educator readiness). To the extent that you feel you need additional information on either of these, you can use the delivery chains to help you understand which information is most critical and how best to collect it.

EXERCISE: MAP THE DELIVERY CHAIN FOR TECHNOLOGY READINESS

Purpose: To draw a delivery chain for technology readiness for a given segment of your districts, identify the weaknesses in the chain and identify solutions to address those weaknesses.

Who should participate? This exercise should be done individually for each strategy and segment you have identified but also considered among the full team.

Directions:

1. Identify a given strategy and list the key actors in your ideal delivery chain — the ones who will be a critical part of ensuring that this segment of districts is technologically ready for the new assessment. Think of actors at five levels: state, region (if applicable), district, school and classroom. In addition to recording which actors are involved, also note how many of each there are in your state (e.g., 100 district technology directors, 1,000 principals, etc.).
2. Draw the single, most important line of influence between your workgroup at the state level and the schools, and articulate how you would like it to function at the level of each link in the chain.
3. Identify and draw secondary lines to other actors who need to be involved.
4. On the delivery chain, identify any **feedback loops** that you might need to build in to give you additional information on readiness. Beyond what the readiness tool gives you, will you need information on implementation of this specific strategy or additional information about infrastructure or staff/personnel readiness? For each piece of information you need, how will you collect it in a way that is efficient and minimally burdensome to the field? Can you adapt already existing lines of communication or events to gather feedback from the field?
5. Identify potential weaknesses in the delivery chain and the ways you will address them. Use the worksheet template on the next page.

Potential weaknesses in delivery chains (EXAMPLE)

	Typical challenges	Potential solutions
Individual relationships	• Weak personal relationships • Low leverage	• Identify and replicate stronger relationships of this type • Identify alternate routes to the end of the chain
Complexity	• Too many actors necessary to get something done	• "Rationalize" chain • Identify alternate routes to the end of the chain
Funding flows	• Mismatch between resource flows and delivery chain	• Redesign chain to take advantage of leverage from resource flows
Feedback loops	• Few or no feedback loops	• Create feedback loops • Use feedback loops to exert influence
Choke points	• Over-reliance on a few key actors	• Build capacity/cooperation of key actors • Identify alternate routes to the end of the chain

Delivery chain analysis of weaknesses and solutions worksheet

	Potential weaknesses	Potential solutions
Individual relationships		
Complexity		
Funding flows		
Feedback loops		
Choke points		
Other		

Planning for Readiness

Once you have identified your state's gaps, the next step is to create a plan for reaching the target of 100 percent readiness by the 2014–15 school year, when the assessments will first be used statewide. To assess your state's progress along the way, it will be helpful to set targets or milestones for filling those gaps over time.

First, you should use the data from your gap analysis to identify the specific gaps that need to be closed in each district to achieve total readiness, along with the strategy or strategies to be used to close each. You may find it helpful to use a simple template, shown below, to conduct this analysis.

Identifying Gaps and Strategies To Close Them (EXAMPLE)

Infrastructure

District (or segment of districts)	Total number of eligible test-takers	Readiness (percentage of eligible test-takers)	Gap to close (number of test-takers)	Deadline to close gap	Strategy or strategies to be used	Person responsible

Network

District (or segment of districts)	Total number of eligible test-takers	Readiness (percentage of eligible test-takers)	Gap to close (number of test-takers)	Deadline to close gap	Strategy or strategies to be used	Person responsible

Devices

District (or segment of districts)	Total number of eligible test-takers	Readiness (percentage of eligible test-takers)	Gap to close (number of test-takers)	Deadline to close gap	Strategy or strategies to be used	Person responsible

Staff and Personnel

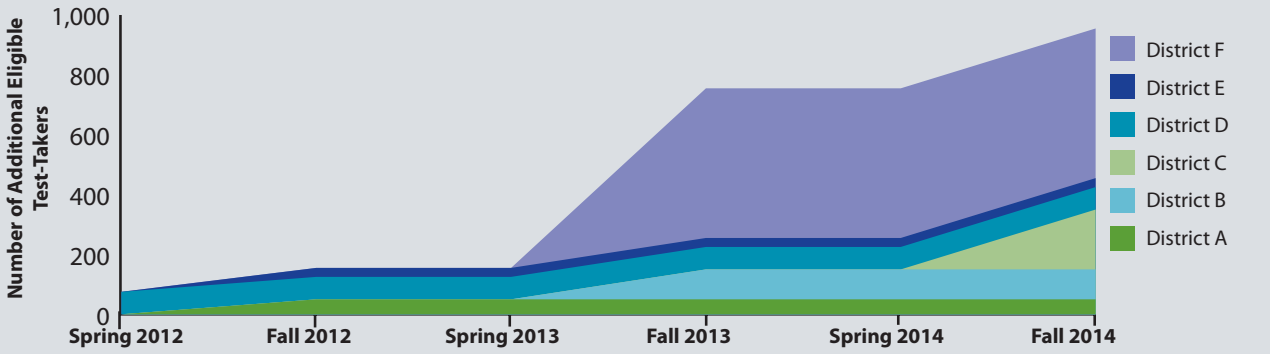
District (or segment of districts)	Total number of eligible test-takers	Readiness (percentage of eligible test-takers)	Gap to close (number of test-takers)	Deadline to close gap	Strategy or strategies to be used	Person responsible

Building the Trajectory

Based on the targets you have identified for each individual district or segment of districts, you can plot the level of infrastructure, broadband, devices and knowledge you should expect to have at any given time. In particular, you may want to identify your expected levels of readiness in infrastructure, network capacity, devices, and staff and personnel knowledge at each of the readiness tool testing periods. For example, what percentage of readiness will you have three months from now? Six months from now? Six months before the assessment goes live? This information will enable you to know at any given point in time whether your work is on track.

The example below plots the percentage of ready devices for a hypothetical state with six districts. Here, you can identify, based on the various targets, where the state should be at each progress check and therefore identify whether the state is on track as a whole to achieve 100 percent readiness by 2014–15. Being behind on this trajectory would trigger a closer look at the data to try to identify and resolve the cause of the delay.

Percentage of Ready Devices (EXAMPLE)



			# of eligible test-takers that can be tested in 2012		# of additional test-takers that can be tested in 2013		# of additional test-takers that can be tested in 2014	
District	Gap to close, # of test-takers that can be tested	Deadline to close gap	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall
A	50	F 2012		50				
B	100	F 2013				100		
C	200	F 2014						200
D	75	S 2012	75					
E	30	F 2012		30				
F	500	F 2013				500		
Added capacity, # of additional test-takers that can be tested			**75**	**80**	**0**	**600**	**0**	**200**
Cumulative added capacity, # of additional test-takers that can be tested			**75**	**155**	**155**	**755**	**755**	**955**
% of eligible test-takers that can be tested on existing devices			**85%**	**87%**	**87%**	**97%**	**97%**	**100%**

Establishing Routines To Monitor Progress

Now that you have established a clear trajectory with milestones for readiness as well as persons responsible for given segments of districts, your system should establish regular routines to review progress and data. These routines will be an important mechanism for regularly checking in to ensure that your team is on track and for problem-solving when you find that your team is off track. It may be helpful to align these routines with the data collection windows for the technology readiness tool, as these will be the periods when you have new information coming in (see previous page for examples of trajectories that are also aligned with these data collection windows). You should also consider what regular meetings currently exist that can be adapted to include these check-ins, so as not to require new meetings.

Chapter 11 gives broader guidance on how to establish routines for your overall CCSS effort. Though designing plans and routines specifically for the technology transition is important, they should be connected as a whole to your broader system for managing and monitoring implementation of new standards and assessments.

Conclusion

You should now have a clear plan for how to ensure that your districts and schools are ready for the new computer-based assessments by 2014. The plan considers what "ready" will look like in at least four categories; where current gaps exist; key strategies for filling gaps; persons responsible for working with districts to ensure that the gaps are filled; and milestones, feedback loops and routines for monitoring progress along the way. It is now time to examine accountability and reporting systems in the context of your CCSS implementation effort.

NOTES

8. TAKE ACTION

Implementation Action IV

Transition Accountability and Data Reporting System

Part of IMPLEMENTING Common Core State Standards and Assessments

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

To download the full workbook, go to www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook

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IN THIS SECTION

8. Implementation Action IV: Transition Accountability and Data Reporting System

Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- What is your state's aspiration for improving student achievement and educational attainment **outcomes** as you implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and transition to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment system? How is this aspiration shared among state leaders, including the governor, policymakers, educators, parents, students and the public? How is it communicated throughout the state?
- How will your state's implementation of the CCSS and transition to PARCC change your aspiration for the state's **accountability system?** What new purposes will it need to serve to drive college and career readiness? To what extent has your state advanced planning for such a system through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver process?
- What are the most critical **indicators** of student performance within such a system? How are they defined? Do state leaders, policymakers, educators, parents, students and others understand what these indicators are and how their actions have an impact on them? What other indicators are needed to fully understand students' readiness for college and career? How will the transition to the CCSS and PARCC change how these indicators are measured?
- How well is your state doing now as measured by these indicators? What is your state's target level of performance, and is it **on track** to reaching it? If not, what is it doing to **adjust course?** What kind of evidence are you using to assess progress?
- How does your state **differentiate and classify** districts and schools based on students' level of college and career readiness? How will CCSS and PARCC implementation change the measures included in this system, including measures of growth and status?
- How do these classifications connect to the intensity and kind of **support and intervention** that the state provides? How will the statewide system of support and intervention connect to your state's overall strategy to implement the CCSS and PARCC?
- How do you, state leaders, policymakers, educators, parents, students and the public find **information** about student preparation for and success in postsecondary education and the workforce, and is it easy to find, interpret and use this information to take action? How will the shift to the CCSS and PARCC change the way your state presents data to each of these groups?

Getting Started

The purpose of this chapter is to help you think through the purpose, design and implementation of your state's accountability systems as your state transitions to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment system. The new accountability systems should look significantly different from those most states developed in response to the No Child Left Behind Act. While most states centered those systems around the need to ensure that all students meet a minimal level of proficiency, these new systems will center around the need to make **ambitious but achievable progress in student performance at a much higher level linked to college and career readiness.**

The chapter is organized around the following sections:

- **Vision for Accountability that Drives College and Career Readiness;**
- **Overview of Core Systems;**
- **Statewide Student Performance Goals;**
- **Differentiation and Classification System;**
- **System of Supports and Interventions;**
- **Data Reporting Systems; and**
- **Resources.**

Feel free to move about the chapter in the way that makes the most sense given your state's position, particularly in light of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waivers. A critical assumption underlying the chapter, however, is that even with progress through waivers, most states will find that their accountability systems are farther behind their standards, assessments and data systems in the capacity to drive college and career readiness. For instance, if your state has already adopted statewide student performance goals but has not made significant changes to its accountability formula, you may want to go directly to the section on differentiation and classification systems. If the statewide student performance goals do not incorporate college- and career-ready indicators, or if they do not roll down to the district and school levels, that section may still be applicable to your state.

Throughout the chapter you will see illustrative examples from states as well as key questions and exercises for you and your colleagues to consider. There are also references to Deliverology 101 and links to external resources to provide further information and guidance. In particular, you should consult the Council of Chief State School Officers' ***Roadmap for Next-Generation State Accountability Systems*** for a comprehensive guide to accountability systems. The intent is to draw on what is known and what states are learning about driving performance.

Vision for Accountability That Drives College and Career Readiness

Implementation of the CCSS and PARCC assessments will require states to advance toward an accountability approach that truly drives toward college and career readiness for all students. Three major changes should result from the implementation:

- A change in accountability **systems** from those that focus on improving rates of minimal proficiency toward those that are geared toward improvement in college and career readiness;
- A change in accountability **measures** — including new measures that harness longitudinal P–20 data as well as status and growth measures from new CCSS-aligned assessments such as PARCC; and
- A change in actual **outcomes** for students resulting from heightened instructional capacity brought about through effective professional learning, instructional tools, data systems and other implementation efforts. The anticipated improvement in student outcomes should be a driving force behind states' work to set performance goals and benchmarks within accountability systems based on college and career readiness measures.

Fortunately, several factors are creating a landscape shift in which such change can occur:

- An **evolving federal-state relationship** through ESEA flexibility;
- A **growing state commitment to** advance the state-district relationship from one based on compliance and sanctions to one focused on **delivery of results for students**; and
- **Enhanced state data systems** with the ability to link data from early childhood through postsecondary education and the workforce.

These shifts have given states the opening to move toward accountability systems that serve as critical levers to improve student preparation for postsecondary success — to firmly sync accountability with the right goals for kids.

In doing so, states can move toward a far broader approach to accountability. In the past, these systems have often been defined only by an accountability formula in which assessment and other student data go into one side of an equation and accountability determinations appear on the other side. A broader definition encompasses statewide performance goals; differentiation and classification systems for districts and schools; systems of supports and interventions; and compelling systems to report data to educators, policymakers, parents and the public. It also encompasses the routines and conversations among leaders, educators and stakeholders. For example, the simple act of asking questions — what are you trying to accomplish, how are you going to accomplish it, what are your major challenges, what are you doing about them — and following up can support a more positive, goal-oriented and accountable culture across the education system. A broader definition also brings more people into the process, building engagement and understanding through transparency from development to data reporting to continuous improvement of the system. It may also encompass other forms of accountability that are out of the scope of this chapter but nevertheless may be critical parts of states' overall theory of action about improving student outcomes:

- **Student accountability,** such as requiring students to attain a certain assessment score for promotion or graduation decisions, for placement into credit-bearing courses, or for postsecondary scholarships.
- **Educator accountability,** such as tying results of educator evaluations to decisions about placement, retention, tenure and compensation.
- **Organizational accountability,** such as holding officials accountable for meeting an organization's goals or project deliverables.
- **Peer-to peer-accountability.** In contrast to more vertical or hierarchical forms of accountability, this horizontal form takes place in a culture in which colleagues hold each other accountable for performance — such as teachers within a professional learning community. (See McKinsey & Co., ***How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better***.)
- **Shared community accountability.** In this form of accountability, actors across a community hold each other accountable for student outcomes — a central tenant of the Promise Neighborhood and STRIVE approaches. (See Education Sector, ***Striving for Student Success: A Model of Shared Accountability***.)

This broader notion of accountability moves the system beyond the kind of top-down, compliance-driven, punitive approach that has had only limited returns to student performance and into the realm of a system that is continuously improving its effectiveness at building capacity to deliver results for kids.

Overview of Core Systems

The primary scope of this chapter is the purpose, design and implementation of the first two of the major core systems that are critical for a college- and career-ready accountability approach. The major core systems include:

- **Statewide student performance goals** for educational achievement and attainment that are tied to college and career readiness aspirations; developed, shared and communicated by state leaders, including the governor; translated into meaningful district and school goals; and linked to policies, practices and resources to meet the goals.
- A system to **differentiate and classify districts and schools** based on student performance outcomes tied to college and career readiness; to identify the districts and schools in greatest need of supports and interventions to build their capacity to prepare students to this level; and to suggest both the intensity and kinds of interventions that districts and schools across the spectrum should pursue to lift student performance toward and beyond readiness.
- A system of **supports and interventions** for all districts and schools, but particularly for the lowest-performing schools, that prescribes and delivers the appropriate level and type of assistance to build capacity following deeper diagnostic review and is closely linked with the state's overall system of instructional support for implementing the CCSS.
- Data reporting systems to share **actionable, meaningful data** on college and career readiness with educators, policymakers, parents and the public to predict future outcomes, identify needs to adjust course and suggest solutions.

All of these systems share similar characteristics — the measurement, analysis and reporting of data tied to college and career readiness expectations; transparency and clarity about the results and what they mean for student preparation for postsecondary pursuits; and joint aims to focus the education system on a set of priorities to achieve real progress. They also differ in important ways. For example, the intensity of stakes varies, from low to moderate (such as a tough conversation between a state and district leader) in the performance goal system to potentially very high (such as district and school turnaround and takeover) in the differentiation and classification system.

Finally, these systems interact at many points, and your state should aim to create a strong degree of coherence across them. The data reporting system, for example, will likely be focused on results from the performance goal and differentiation and classification systems. The differentiation system could be leveraged as a strategy to meet statewide performance goals (such as closing achievement gaps). Finally, the supports and interventions system can be a central delivery mechanism for meeting the statewide performance goals while drawing heavily on timely, actionable data to serve the lowest-performing schools and districts.

Purpose

States should be very clear about what they expect to achieve through each of the systems. This clarity of purpose is essential for strong design and implementation, including continuous improvement processes. For each system, you should think through the outcomes it should bring about overall and how it should be used by various actors.

EXERCISE: CLARIFY PURPOSE OF EACH CORE SYSTEM

Purpose: To identify the outcomes you expect to achieve through each accountability and data reporting system in your state, both overall and for specific actors.

Who should participate? State policy leaders; district and school leaders; teachers; students; parents; and representatives from business, community and student advocacy organizations should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. For each system, consider the overall outcomes you expect to achieve — e.g., clarify state college and career readiness aspirations, communicate progress, meet college and career readiness achievement gap performance goals, build capacity.
2. Repeat the exercise, thinking through what key actors from each level will get out of the system — e.g., forum to communicate priorities, data to more clearly target assistance, information for resource allocation. Key actors to consider include:
    a. State — governor, chief/state education agency, state board, legislature
    b. District — superintendent, school board
    c. School — principal, teachers, students, parents
    d. Community — business and community leaders, nonprofit organizations, advocacy organizations

	Overall purpose	State purposes	District purposes	School purposes	Community purposes
Statewide performance goals					
Differentiation and classification system					
System of supports and interventions					
Data reporting systems					

Basic Design Components

The purpose of each system should directly inform decisions about design. Most of these decisions will involve three major design components: indicators, metrics and determinations.

Indicators

Indicators are the measures of a goal or aspiration. A college and career readiness system will incorporate indicators that measure course participation and success, achievement, and attainment outcomes. To incentivize and support continuous improvement, you should design the indicators in a manner that reflects a continuum of whether students are progressing toward, achieving or exceeding college and career readiness. (See Achieve and The Education Trust, ***Measures that Matter***.)

This continuum of indicators allows states to accomplish the dual goals of ensuring that students identified as off track receive the supports they need to get back on track while simultaneously avoiding a situation in which the floor becomes the ceiling for students who meet the college and career readiness requirements earlier in high school. The exceeding college and career readiness indicators, such as earning college credit through Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) or dual enrollment courses while in high school, provide incentives for students and schools to strive for more. The table below suggests some indicators that states may incorporate into the accountability systems.

Possible Indicators (EXAMPLE)

	Progressing toward college and career readiness	Achieving college and career readiness	Exceeding college and career readiness
Course completion and success	• Timely credit accumulation • Credit recovery	• Successful completion of college- and career-ready course of study	• Participation in AP, IB or dual enrollment
Achievement	• Performance on CCSS-aligned assessments	• Meeting standards on the college- and career-ready statewide anchor assessment • Postsecondary remediation rates	• College-level performance on AP and/or IB exams
Attainment	• Graduation	• Earning the college- and career-ready diploma	• Earning credits in dual enrollment courses • Application to and enrollment in postsecondary

It is important to note that this table focuses on high school-oriented indicators because many states now rely only on graduation rates and assessments at the 9th or 10th grade content level, while there are many opportunities to expand the range of indicators. College and career readiness, however, is an imperative for elementary and middle school students as well. States should consider what kind of indicators beyond assessment scores they can incorporate in these grades to signal that students are on track toward college and career readiness, including early warning indicators such as attendance and course completion. (See Data Quality Campaign, ***Measuring the Education Pipeline***.)

Your state may not currently collect all of the indicators you would like to include within the system (for a profile of your state's data system, see the Data Quality Campaign's 2011 ***State Analysis***.) For example, your state may not currently have student assessment data aligned to the CCSS. While planning to enhance your data collections, you can think about valid proxies for the indicator that might substitute in the interim — do not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. For example, if your system does not collect student-level course-taking data in advanced mathematics, focus on the numbers of students participating in and earning college credit on AP/IB/dual enrollment courses. This presents a good opportunity to make the case for why the data are critical to release; otherwise, the education community will not have the necessary data to make informed decisions to drive improved student achievement. State data systems are most valuable when they can provide timely data to key education stakeholders to make meaningful changes in the preparation of students.

EXERCISE: PLAN FOR NEW DATA INDICATORS

Purpose: To clarify new indicators that will be needed in your state's accountability systems and the process for incorporating them into your systems.

Who should participate? State education agency accountability, assessment and data staff along with stakeholders from districts, schools and community should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Based on your state's aspirations for students, determine the indicators needed to measure progress toward meeting this aspiration. The resource from the Data Quality Campaign (Measuring the Education Pipeline) may be helpful in this process.
2. Of these indicators, identify those that your state currently does not use for accountability and reporting purposes and list them in the left-hand column.
3. For each of these new indicators:
    a. Define the data that will be needed to construct the indicator;
    b. Determine the data owner, data source/collection methodology and verification process;
    c. Identify a proxy indicator that can be used in the interim; and
    d. Identify any data that the state no longer needs to collect because of use of this indicator.

New indicator	Data needed for indicator	Data management • Owner • Collection • Verification	Proxy indicator for interim use	Data that no longer need to be collected

Metrics

This chapter uses the term "metric" to describe a measure of an indicator that can be used to assess progress. For example, an indicator within your state's performance goal system might be the percentage of students who score proficient or advanced in 5th grade mathematics on an assessment aligned to the CCSS, where proficiency is tied to a level of performance that is on track to college and career readiness. The metric would be the comparison between the percentage of students who score proficient or advanced in 5th grade mathematics in 2012 and the expected percentage proficient or advanced in 2012 given your state's trajectory.

In differentiation and classification systems, your state will likely use a combination of status metrics and growth metrics. For example, a status metric for elementary schools might be the percentage of students proficient or advanced in grades 3–5 compared to a target level of performance for that year. A growth metric for elementary schools would use individual students' historical assessment data to estimate how much growth, on average, 4th and 5th grade students made in that year as well as the likelihood that this growth will lead to students scoring proficient or advanced within a few years. Assessing progress using status metrics to illuminate where students are currently performing is critical — an importance that increases as students get closer to high school graduation and opportunities for growth diminish. Assessing progress using growth metrics — particularly "growth to standard" metrics linked to college- and career-ready levels of performance — sends the clear signal that all students are expected to progress academically along the continuum of readiness.

Determinations

Determinations are the judgments made about performance that lead to an action. A state, for example, may determine that a school is in Priority status given its rating in the differentiation and classification system, which would trigger a specific set of interventions. Or a state may determine that a district did not meet its expected level of performance in 2012 on its performance goal trajectory, which would trigger a wider range of actions, such as a series of technical assistance sessions to reallocate resources toward strategies more likely to help the district meet the goal. As well, a state may determine that a school with one of the highest rates of improvement in the percentage of students scoring college and career ready on a statewide anchor assessment is eligible for reward status, which would trigger recognition and a financial award. States should think carefully about how they use metrics to differentiate and classify districts and schools. Decisions about how much growth is sufficient, how much weight is assigned to different metrics and the ways in which different metrics are combined send important signals to educators that have enormous implications for student instruction and support.

Implementation Considerations

For each system, your state should think through how it will approach the following implementation elements to ensure that the system meets its intended purpose:

- **Stakeholder engagement and communications:** Accountability systems cannot be designed and carried out by a small number of state education agency staff in isolation. Only by authentically engaging the full range of stakeholders in the process from development to implementation to continuous improvement can the system have the necessary transparency, clarity and understandability. Are there structures for stakeholder engagement and communications your state is using for CCSS implementation that can be used for an accountability conversation? (See ***Chapter 4*** of this workbook on stakeholder engagement and communication.)

- **Governance and management:** It needs to be clear what entity or person has the decisionmaking responsibility for overseeing the success of the system and what entity or person will manage it day to day. How does this fit in with the overall structure for governing CCSS implementation in your state? (See ***pages 3.5–3.8*** of this workbook on governance of CCSS.)

- **Data:** Each system will put pressure on data collections, management, quality improvement and analysis. It is necessary to plan carefully exactly how your state will access, verify and calculate data, particularly data needed for college and career readiness indicators that come from data sources outside your state's assessment system.

- **Continuous improvement process:** A clear process for state leaders to evaluate the impact of the system and make adjustments to improve its impact will ensure that the accountability system continues to get better at driving college and career readiness throughout your state. It is often tempting to try to keep accountability systems constant to preserve reliability or comparability from year to year. However, as new data sources become available, more refined growth models are developed and new PARCC assessments come on line, adapting the system quickly will be critical. Putting into place the right processes from the beginning will help ensure that this continuous improvement becomes a reality. (See ***Chapter 11*** of this workbook on routines.)

Statewide Student Performance Goals

A clear, easily understood set of college and career readiness student performance goals, along with a system to manage against them, can serve as the central driver of not only your state's accountability system but also your entire reform agenda. They can serve numerous critical purposes: They can clarify the state's aspirations and priorities; they can focus policy, practice and resources on the most effective strategies to improve college and career readiness; and they can signal the need to adjust course along the way to ensure effective implementation toward results. More broadly, they can be used by your state's leaders, including the governor, to rally support for reform; bring stakeholders together for a common purpose; and communicate that what matters the most is real, measurable improvement in student outcomes. (See National Governors Association, ***Setting Statewide College- and Career-Ready Goals***.) They can be a guiding force to ensure that your state's implementation strategy for the CCSS and PARCC assessments brings about real results for students.

In the last few years, more and more states have begun to set these goals and use them to guide their college- and career-ready reforms. The eight states that participated in the College- and Career-Ready Policy Institute (CCRPI), a multistate collaborative sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support states in developing college and career readiness policy reform plans, began by developing performance goals. (See box on next page.)

Still more states developed them in response to Section A of the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant application. Today, states that have been applying for waivers under the U.S. Department of Education's ESEA Flexibility program have crafted them at the state, district and school levels under the Annual Measureable Objectives (AMO) requirements in Principle 2. As states develop and adjust their goals over time, they can consider a range of design components — aspirations; indicators; baselines, targets and trajectories; district- and school-level targets and trajectories; and routines to monitor and drive programs.

Louisiana Goals Developed through the College- and Career-Ready Policy Institute (EXAMPLE)

	Goal	Measure	2005–06 baseline	2009–10 target	2013–14 target
1	Reduce dropouts and increase high school graduation rates	Four-year cohort graduation rate[1]	64.8	67.0	80.0
2	Increase readiness for postsecondary education	% of students graduating with LA Core-4[2]	58.5	62.5	72.5
		% of graduating class with ACT score of 18 or higher in English and 19 or higher in math[3]	46.1	51.1	58.1
3	Increase career readiness of students	# of National Career Readiness Certificates (WorkKeys Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze)	2,652	4,000	7,000
		# of industry-based certifications earned by high school students in high-skill, high-wage and high-demand occupations as approved by the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council and BESE	3,600	7,500	10,000
4	Increase participation and completion rate in postsecondary education	% of public school 11th graders enrolling in an LA public postsecondary institution within four years (includes dual enrollment)[4]	51.4	54.4	63.4
		# of high school graduates enrolling in a technical college or two-year LA public postsecondary institution within two years of graduation	*	*	*
		# of public postsecondary[5] degrees and certificates awarded (one-year certificate, associate, bachelor's or higher)	32,416 (2007–08)	35,500	41,000
		# of public postsecondary degrees and certificates awarded (one-year certificate, associate, bachelor's or higher) in high-skill, high-wage and high-demand occupations as defined by the Louisiana Occupational Forecasting Conference	*	*	*
		# of credit hours enrolled in public postsecondary institutions by LA public high school students	*	*	*

*Historical data are currently being researched by the Board of Regents and Department of Education to determine the baseline and set targets.

1 The percentage of students who entered the 9th grade and graduated four years later. Students who transfer from the LA public education system are not counted in this rate.

2 Baseline for this measure is TOPS Core.

3 Baseline and targets provided by LA Board of Regents.

4 Baseline provided by LA Board of Regents using LDE 2002–03 grade 11 data file.

5 Baseline and target provided by LA Board of Regents.

Source: http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/15403.pdf

Aspirations

A state's student performance goals should strongly reflect the state's aspirations, both for its students and for the future of the state as a whole. Often, these aspirations reflect state goals for economic growth, improvements in quality of life for its citizens, or easing inequality based on race/ethnicity and income. These aspirations often inform a state's major education policy agenda and are often referenced in speeches and other communications by the governor, state chief, higher education officials, and business and community leaders. Articulating them can not only focus the system in a clear direction but also bring stakeholders together toward a common purpose. (See Chapter 1A of Deliverology 101 on defining the aspiration.)

Indicators

Indicators are selected to best **measure** progress toward the state's aspirations. If the state has a goal to improve the quality of its science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) workforce, for example, the state could select a variety of indicators that would show if progress toward the goal is being made. As mentioned earlier, states should select several indicators for course completion and success, achievement, and attainment along a continuum of progressing toward, meeting and exceeding college and career readiness standards. For example, a state could select the percentage of all students meeting an on track to college- and career-ready benchmark in 8th grade math (achievement/progressing toward), the percentage of high school students completing four years of math (course completion and success/meeting), and the percentage of students who earn postsecondary credit in STEM courses while in high school (attainment/exceeding). Some states may wish to expand the range of actors engaged in this goal by broadening the continuum of college and career readiness to encompass more cradle-to-career indicators, such as the percentage of entering kindergarten students scoring at a certain level on a math readiness assessment and the number of students completing STEM degrees in postsecondary institutions.

Your state's priority indicators will change over time, particularly your mathematics and English language arts achievement indicators, as your state transitions to the CCSS and PARCC assessments. While recognizing this and communicating that indicators will shift over time is critical, selecting the best indicators your state has available now is imperative to maximize student progress through the transition process.

Student characteristics and program participation: All indicators should be disaggregated by student race/ethnicity, economic status, disability status and English language learner status. This disaggregation is critical for public reporting and to ensure that educators have the information they need to make clear ties between performance and systemic issues with instruction and support that affect particular subgroups. Your state may also have additional ways of grouping students, such as states that have "lowest quartile" types of subgroups following the ESEA waiver process.

Indicators defined as percentages: Many indicators will be rates with numerators and denominators. For college- and career-ready indicators, particularly at the meeting and exceeding areas of the continuum, being very careful about selecting the denominator is imperative. Denominators that include a select group of students can send an inaccurate picture of performance in a school. For example, the rate of students in a graduating cohort with scores of 3 or higher on an AP exam will appear far higher if the denominator is only those students who took an AP exam. It is advisable in this circumstance to include a denominator that includes all students in the 9th grade cohort as the denominator.

Indicators defined as numbers of students: In some cases, states may wish to define some indicators not only as percentages but also in numbers of students. This is particularly important in communicating the urgency of meeting the state's aspiration and in sending a clear message about what it will take to meet the targets. It can also clarify the process of building the trajectory. (See next section.)

Leading indicators: Some states may select not only summative, or lagging, performance indicators but also a set of leading indicators to give early signals about the direction of progress. Ideally, leading indicators would be able to be measured more than once a year and would send clear early warning signals to those who can take action to improve performance. They are critical components of your state's routines to monitor performance but can also serve as accountability metrics in their own right. Such an approach has been seen mostly at the district level, such as the high school freshmen on track measure that is reported by Chicago Public Schools to help meet graduation rate goals. (See ***High School Freshmen On Track Rates by School*** and ***High School Freshmen On Track Rate Fact Sheet***.)

Leading Indicators (EXAMPLE)

Performance Indicator: The percentage of high school students graduating high school in four years having completed a college- and career-ready curriculum. The state's diploma requirements include:

- Successful completion of an Algebra II course and four years of math;
- Successful completion of four years of grade-level English; and
- Successful completion of three years of science, including a biology, chemistry and physics.

If your indicator is the percentage of high school students graduating having completed a college- and career-ready curriculum, **leading indicators** might include:

- The percentage of students enrolling in Algebra II by 11th grade, Geometry by 10th and Algebra I by 9th grade;
- The percentage of students who are enrolled in Algebra I in 9th grade with a grade of C or higher at the first grading period and an attendance rate above 89 percent; and
- The percentage of students completing Algebra II by 11th grade, Geometry by 10th and Algebra I by 9th grade.

Baselines, Targets and Trajectories

Once your state has selected a set of indicators, the next step is to understand where performance is now (baseline) and where it has been (historical progress), decide where your state wants student performance to be and by when (target), and clarify the expected path between the baseline and the target (trajectory). The targets and trajectories are used to gauge progress along the way. If your state has already completed this work through its waiver application, RTTT application or otherwise, you may wish to skip ahead or read through this section to see how your goals compare to the principles outlined here. (See Chapter 3B of Deliverology 101 for more in-depth treatment of these steps.)

Baseline: The baseline level of performance can be thought of in two ways. A simple way is to think about it as the current level of performance, usually as indicated by the most recent year's results. A more complex way is to think about it as the expected amount of future progress given the amount of progress over the previous several years. The second approach is preferable because it gives more information to help set an ambitious but achievable target.

In pursuing the second approach, your state should consider what the data patterns have been for the indicator historically, whether growth/decline has been predictable or nonlinear over time, and where the level of performance would be over time absent any interventions. As well, examine the factors that contributed to the metric's historical growth or decline.

It may be necessary to disaggregate the data by districts and schools and roll up these data in different ways to better understand what it will take to achieve your target at the state level. The more detail that can be accounted for early on in the process, the more accurate the estimations will be. You may also find that examining the data through different subgroup lenses allows for patterns to emerge that would otherwise be masked at an aggregate level. This might include breaking out the data by:

- **Individual comparisons** (e.g., students, teachers, schools, districts);
- **Characteristic** (e.g., special education, low income, English language learners, rural and urban schools, etc.); or
- **Performance band** (e.g., how do the top and bottom school quintiles compare along a metric, how do the top and bottom district quintiles compare?). (See pg. 98–99 for more information.)

Notice that in the example below, the state has chosen to use college- and career-ready diploma trend data from a performance band — its highest and lowest performing quintiles of schools — to better inform state target-setting.

Using Historical Data To Establish the Baseline (EXAMPLE)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	Average yearly percentage point change
Percentage of high school students earning college- and career-ready diploma in MeasuredState	32%	36%	37%	40%	+3 annually
Schools in top quintile	45%	50%	55%	65%	+5 annually
Schools in bottom quintile	24%	25%	25%	26%	+1 annually

Equipped with this knowledge of historical data trends, your state is better positioned to set realistic and ambitious targets.

Target: The target level of performance is the number that defines your state's aspiration — it is your state communicating to all of the actors in the education system that student performance not only will improve but also will improve to this specific number by this specific time. It enhances the sense of urgency to reform, brings people together with a common cause, and shows that the state is serious about implementing the CCSS in a way that creates real change and real impact on students.

Targets should be set according to the SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic and Time Bound. It is critical that the targets are ambitious enough to stretch and motivate actors throughout the education system but achievable enough to be legitimate and meaningful to all. The language used in RTTT and the ESEA Flexibility requirements has been "ambitious but achievable."

The target-setting process can be carried out in a variety of ways depending on your state's context. The following represent three possible ways to set targets, and your state could choose to use any combination of these three:

- Your state may **have previously adopted targets** on one or more indicators through a strategic planning process, a grant application, its K–12 ESEA accountability system or a higher education accountability system. If so, your state can adopt these targets and use them to inform the target level of performance for other related indicators that you have selected.

- Your state may wish to **set targets based on aspirations** of state leaders, educators, parents and other stakeholders. If so, a process can be established in which you share baseline data with the group and have participants walk through guiding questions to reach targets that they can agree are ambitious but achievable.

- A third approach is to **use a data-rich benchmarking process** to determine the appropriate targets. There are four benchmarking techniques that can be helpful in target-setting, each with a set of questions that can be used to guide the process:

  - Historical comparisons: What have the data trend lines been at the state level, by subgroups of students, type of district, quartiles of schools, etc.? What would the impact be on the indicator if a group of students or schools grew by a particular percentage over the historical average?
  - Internal peer comparisons: What have been the data trend lines been at the state level, by subgroups of students, type of district, quartiles of schools, etc.? What would the impact be on the indicator if a group of students or schools achieved at the level of a higher-achieving group?
  - External peer comparisons: How do our data trend lines at the state level compare to other states, by subgroups of students, type of district, quartiles of schools, etc.? What would the impact be on the indicator if a group of students or schools achieved at the level of a neighbor state? For example, a state looking to estimate the target and trajectory for the percentage of students earning a college- and career-ready diploma could look to the experience of a top-performing state that has seen growth in the percentages of its students earning a college- and career-ready diploma in the past.
  - International comparisons: How do our data trend lines at the state level compare to other countries, by subgroups of students, type of district, quartiles of schools, etc.? What would the impact be on the indicator if a group of students or schools achieved at the level of a country of interest?

It is critical for your state to think about how it will establish baselines and targets once new assessment indicators are available under the PARCC assessments. For example, the state may be more likely to use internal peer or external peer comparisons to set targets at this point rather than historical comparisons. It may even be able to adjust targets based on international comparisons if that kind of information is available.

Subgroup-level targets: Your state should consider how to leverage targets to clarify state goals and drive strategy to close achievement gaps. There are several options for how your state could do this. Some states have decided to have the same target for all student subgroups, others have decided to apply the rate of improvement called for by the overall target to each subgroup so that each group has to make the same rate of progress, and others have had different targets for different subgroups but called on greater rates of progress for groups of students that start out farther behind (see example below). As you consider the options, it would be strongly advisable to consult with stakeholders about setting targets for individual groups of students with varying baseline levels of performance and historical rates of progress. Having this engagement from the beginning of the conversation will ensure that your state makes this difficult and complex decision with the support and guidance of those with the most insight into the drivers of performance for these groups of students.

Massachusetts Graduation Rate and MassCore Completion Baselines and Targets by Subgroup — Greater Improvement Expected from Subgroups with Lower Baselines (EXAMPLE)

MassCore Completion Rate, sorted by 2011 percent

	2011		2014		Percentage point change	Percent change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Asian	2,140	67.9	2,801	82.7	14.8	30.9
Black/African American	2,298	46.9	3,811	73.2	26.3	65.8
Hispanic	3,462	51.5	5,323	75.9	24.4	53.8
White	34,840	74.9	42,264	84.3	9.4	21.3
Low income	9,076	53.1	13,185	76.6	23.5	45.3
Students with disabilities	4,178	60.0	5,767	78.6	18.6	38.0
Limited English proficient	409	30.1	913	66.5	36.4	123.2
Female	22,459	71.0	28,145	82.9	11.9	25.3
Male	21,082	68.3	27,097	82.0	13.7	28.5
Overall	**43,541**	**69.6**	**55,241**	**82.5**	**12.9**	**26.9**

Five-Year Graduation Rate, sorted by 2010 percent

	2010		2014		Percentage point change	Percent change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Asian	3,216	89.4	3,294	92.4	3.0	2.4
Black/African American	5,110	73.5	5,445	79.9	6.4	6.6
Hispanic	6,898	65.9	7,390	72.5	6.6	7.1
White	48,169	89.5	49,836	92.1	2.6	3.5
Low income	21,257	72.3	22,668	77.9	5.6	6.6
Students with disabilities	10,091	68.6	11,173	76.3	7.7	10.7
Limited English proficient	2,755	63.7	3,475	71.4	7.7	26.2
Female	32,554	87.0	33,542	90.3	3.3	3.0
Male	32,049	82.4	33,585	86.4	4.0	4.8
Overall	**64,603**	**84.7**	**67,127**	**88.3**	**3.6**	**3.9**

Source: http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/docs/0311/spec_item1_deliveryplan.pdf

Trajectories: The trajectory is the path that you expect performance will take from the current level of performance to the target. It is often made up of annual benchmarks from the current year to the target year. The trajectory is essential for monitoring progress and deciding where mid-course corrections need to be made. (See Chapter 3B in Deliverology 101.) For example, if one indicator is showing enough improvement to meet or exceed the trajectory, and another indicator has not shown enough improvement to meet the trajectory, the state will know that it needs to adjust its strategies for improvement on the second indicator.

Like baselines and targets, your state can develop trajectories in several different ways:

- **Develop a linear trajectory,** which is a straight line between the current level of performance and the target. The linear trajectory calls on steady, incremental progress each year.
- **Set annual benchmarks** based on what you know about historical progress following interventions. For example, if your state has just implemented a new assessment system with much lower scores in the first year, you may know that in the second and third years you can expect to see more improvement in scores than you will in years four and beyond.
- **Estimate the impact of future strategies and interventions** (see pages 5.4–5.5 and 6.5–6.6 of this workbook) using impact data from similar past interventions to help estimate the trajectory toward the target. It is critical in this case that states avoid trajectories that push the bulk of expected performance improvement toward the later years.

Establishing the Baseline (EXAMPLE)

If your state would like to estimate the trajectory by tying it to the strategies and interventions it is planning to implement to meet the target, the first step is to establish the baseline.

In this example, the baseline is 40 percent. With an average growth of 3 percentage points annually, we can expect the percentage of students earning a college- and career-ready diploma in 2018 to be 64 percent without any additional interventions. The state has set a target of graduating 80 percent of students with a college- and career-ready diploma by 2018, so there is a 16 percentage point gap to close.

	Baseline	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Percentage of high school students earning college- and career-ready diploma	40%	43%	46%	49%	52%	55%	58%	61%	64%

As a next step, states can ask themselves some key questions about their strategies or interventions:

- What has the impact been?
- On whom is/was the impact greatest?
- Are the outcomes in line with what was intended?
- What actions should be taken upon reviewing these impact data?
- What works and does not work?
- Where does it work, and where might a better intervention be employed?

States can also think through how their strategies will have an impact over time. Some will have a lagged effect, while others have a more immediate impact on your trajectory. For example, if your state was looking to develop a 12th year bridge course in mathematics, it would be reasonable to expect that there would be an immediate impact in the number of students scoring college- and career-ready on a state assessment. However, you will find that some interventions take additional time to phase in and produce results.

States can also consider the differentiated effects of a strategy by individual, characteristic or performance band. Once you have a comprehensive understanding of your state's historical data patterns and interventions and their potential to help reach your goals, you can better assess whether they are the best use of your limited resources or whether your state might be better served reallocating resources or focusing on a specific subgroup of students.

The state would close the gap by estimating the impact of each of its strategies on the level of performance each year. For example, the following table includes estimates of the impact (none/low/medium/high) of each intervention on the level of performance.

You can also assign values in numbers of students who will be affected by the interventions, as Kentucky has done with its trajectory toward its college and career readiness target (see example).

Impact of Each Intervention on the Level of Performance (EXAMPLE)

Intervention	Baseline	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
12th grade bridge courses	-	-	L	L	M	M	M	L	L
New math and science teachers	-	-	M	H	H	M	M	L	L
9th grade dropout prevention program	-	-	None	None	None	M	M	M	M
Total	-	-	L	M	M	M	M	L	L

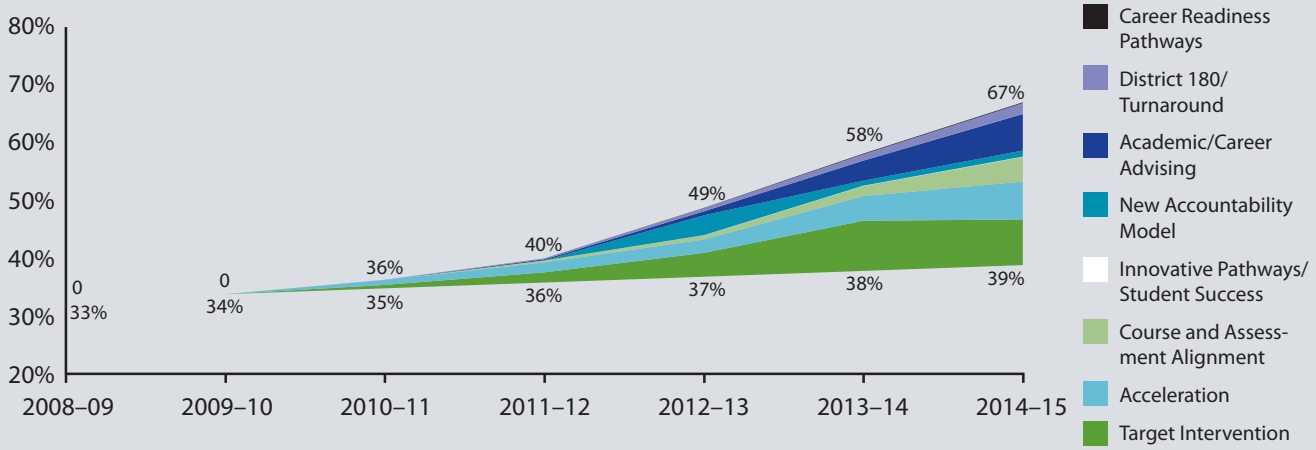
Impact of Each Intervention on the Level of Performance (EXAMPLE)

Kentucky currently has a graduation rate of 76 percent; however, only 34 percent of students are college and/or career ready as measured by the ACT benchmarks. To support the efforts of districts in ensuring that more graduates obtain 21st-century skills and are prepared to attend college, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is implementing several strategies focused on increasing the college and career readiness rate.

This example provides an estimated number of additional students needed each year for each priority strategy for Kentucky to reach its goal of 67 percent of students college and/or career ready by 2015. If Kentucky continues business as usual, only 39 percent of students will be college and/or career ready by 2015.

The trajectory was created with a focus on the current 8th grade cohort (class of 2015) and their exposure/participation in KDE's specific initiatives for increasing college and career readiness. The current 8th grade cohort has approximately 48,000 students, of which 16,320 (48,000 * 0.34) are college and/or career ready. To meet the 2015 goal, Kentucky must have an additional 15,840 students college and career ready. The trajectory also assumes student gains will be maintained year over year (e.g., student impact from 2011will be sustained in subsequent classes).

Finally, the major impact on students will be in years 2012–13 and 2013–14 due to the implementation of the new accountability model and the cumulative effect of all eight strategies.



College and Career Readiness Trajectory — Additional Number of Students

Strategy	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	Total
Target intervention	950	1,488	2,880	3,840	2,376	11,534
Acceleration	1,358	1,463	1,628	1,888	1,974	8,309
Course and assessment alignment	0	298	480	768	1,267	2,813
New accountability model	0	0	2,400	384	317	3,101
Innovative pathways/student success	0	0	34	30	30	93
Academic/career advising	0	149	480	1,536	1,901	4,066
District 180/turnaround	66	150	380	488	573	1,658
Career readiness definition	0	0	32	51	37	119
# of additional college- and career-ready students	2,374	3,548	8,313	8,984	8,475	31,693
# of unique college- and career-ready students *	1,187	1,774	4,157	4,492	4,237	15,847
Total # of college- and career-ready students*	17,507	19,281	23,437	27,929	32,167	
% of students college and career ready	36%	40%	49%	58%	67%	

* Due to the duplicated student participation in the above eight strategies, the total number of additional college- and career-ready students has been reduced by 50 percent.

Source: http://www.education.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/8FD9B030-078E-4874-AC12-C69A2B100762/0/CCRRateTrajectoryDetail.pdf

District- and school-level targets and trajectories: States will not meet their student performance goals through actions taken only at the state level; rather, actions taken in districts and schools will far more directly affect student readiness for college and career. Taking state-level targets and trajectories to the district and school levels will go far in establishing the performance-driven relationships needed for truly transformational change. States may have set these through their AMO process, but if this process was geared toward setting minimal threshold targets, you may wish to consider setting stretch targets — those that require districts and schools to make greater progress.

Generally, there are three different approaches to managing the work of establishing district- and school-level targets and trajectories:

- A state might employ a **top-down** approach by mandating targets and trajectories for districts and schools.
- A state might employ a **bottom-up** approach in which districts and/or schools develop their own targets and trajectories and submit them to the state for consideration/approval.
- A **hybrid** approach features discussions between the state and districts/schools in an effort to build buy-in and understanding around the trajectories and targets, or a state might suggest targets and trajectories to districts and/or schools, which can then accept them, raise them or lower them based on their own goals.

Your state may decide to draw on these approaches in varying ways, depending on the indicator or on the state-district context. Regardless of the approach, your state should be clear about the connection between the district and school targets and the state's overall targets. For example, you should aim that if all districts meet their targets, the state as a whole will meet or exceed its target and that a district will meet or exceed its target if all of its schools meet their targets. This is not only mathematically necessary, but it reinforces the delivery relationship — how each district and school plays a role in the state's overall progress and how critical it is to the state that it support districts and schools in meeting their targets.

Furthermore, states should be thoughtful about the kind of improvement the targets would expect of districts and schools at various performance levels. For example, do you want districts and schools in the bottom half of performance to make tremendous improvement, and that this will lead to meeting the state goal? Or do you want all districts and schools to make improvement, and if so, do you want those that have lower performance to begin with to make more rapid progress?

Routines To Monitor and Adjust

While state performance goals can be powerful levers in their own right by communicating the state's aspirations and clarifying priorities, perhaps their greatest power arises from regular reviews of progress among those responsible for effectively executing the strategies to meet the goals. (See Deliverology 101, Chapter 4B.) For example, a state can use its trajectory work to frame a conversation about the impact of various strategies and interventions. If the state is not meeting its trajectory, it can dig into the impact data on strategies to determine where it needs to adjust course to have the expected impact. These routines can serve a role similar to the determinations in the differentiation and classification system — making clear where the state, districts and schools are against the targets and trajectories to which they have committed.

Some states are beginning to use their performance goals to frame routines between state chiefs, senior members of the state education agency and project managers that illuminate progress on key indicators and leading indicators, discuss the status of implementation efforts, and determine next steps to improve strategy and implementation.

Some states are also using the goals to frame conversations between state leaders and district leaders to reinforce the importance of the goals, clarify the key strategies for reaching them, decide whether adjustments need to be made given the rate of progress against expectations, determine needs for assistance and identify effective practices that can be shared more widely. (See example below.)

Rhode Island's Gap Analysis Meetings (EXAMPLE)

For the first part of the local education agency (LEA) RTTT Gap Analysis process, the Rhode Island Department of Education will populate LEA data into a Student Performance Outcomes Gap Analysis Template. An example from this template is shown below. These data will be used during the Gap Analysis meetings with the LEA leadership teams to monitor progress toward the student performance goals set by each LEA and to reinforce the frame of the RTTT work in the context of improving student academic outcomes.

District 1: Goals and performance measures	2009 actual	2010 actual	2011 goals	Difference 2009–10	Progress 2009–10	Gap between 2010 actual and 2011 goal
Students entering the **4th grade** will be proficient in **reading** on NECAP	75%	72%	78%	-3%	▼	-6%
Students entering the **4th grade** will be proficient in **mathematics** on NECAP	64%	63%	66%	-1%	▼	-3%
Students entering the **8th grade** will be proficient in **reading** on NECAP	78%	79%	80%	1%	▲	-1%
Students entering the **8th grade** will be proficient in **mathematics** on NECAP	59%	52%	60%	-7%	▼	-8%
85% of students who first entered 9th grade four years prior will graduate from high school	80%	81%	81%	1%	▲	0%
77% of students who graduate from high school will enroll in an institution of higher education within 16 months of receiving a diploma	75%	75%	76%	0%	◀▶	-1%
90% of students who enroll in an institution of higher education will complete at least one year's worth of credit within two years of enrollment	80%	88%	82%	8%	▲	6%

Source: http://www.ride.ri.gov/commissioner/RaceToTheTop/docs/RIRTTT_Performance%20Monitoring%20Plan_Revised6.24.11.pdf

Differentiation and Classification System

Although your state performance goals and system to manage progress against them can go a long way in differentiating districts and schools based on the variation in student performance outcomes and in sending some real signals about the level of progress that needs to occur as well as areas that are progressing better than others, they likely don't have the ability to more finely distinguish overall school and district performance. To credibly evaluate the performance of institutions such as schools and districts at moving students toward and beyond college and career readiness, your state needs a more sophisticated set of metrics and more precise rules for determinations. It also must comply with federal requirements for accountability systems set through ESEA or, for states granted waivers, the requirements set through ESEA Flexibility.

The system to differentiate and classify schools and districts serves a number of purposes:

- It **identifies the districts and schools** in greatest need of state intervention and support;
- It **can rally community support** to improve districts and schools that are not making sufficient progress;
- It **can serve as a strategy for reaching state performance goals** such as those to close achievement gaps; and
- It **can provide strong incentives** for districts and schools to improve college and career readiness and receive rewards and recognition.

As your state thinks through the primary aims for its differentiation and classification system — given federal law, state policy and implementation context — and state priority goals, recognizing that the new system will be focused on driving ambitious but achievable progress in student college and career readiness is critical. The system will not be focused on improving rates of students meeting a minimal level of proficiency. The implications of this shift should be considered thoughtfully in the design and implementation of the system.

Indicators

The indicators chosen for the differentiation and classification system, like those for state performance goals, should reflect student performance in terms of course completion and success, attainment, and achievement. They should also flow along a continuum of progressing toward, meeting and exceeding college and career readiness. The indicators will be different — and there likely will be more of them — than those selected for use through the statewide performance goal system. For instance, states will have to include reading and math proficiency results in the 3rd–8th grades and once in high school in the differentiation and classification system, while they might have chosen to focus on reading in 4th grade and math in 8th grade for the performance goal system.

The indicators for the system will also be different from those in prior differentiation and classification systems. Achievement indicators will transition from state assessment results indicating minimal proficiency to state-developed and PARCC assessment results tied to college and career readiness. For example, some states have already implemented more rigorous academic standards and cut scores that reflect higher expectations for proficiency. Even as states work toward implementation of the PARCC assessments, some are beginning to incorporate the CCSS into current assessment systems. All states' achievement indicators will reflect college- and career-ready achievement once the consortia assessments are implemented in 2014–15.

States have traditionally included only one attainment measure in these systems — the high school graduation rate. College- and career-ready systems, however, will include a broader mix of attainment measures, including those showing that students have met college and career readiness expectations, such as graduation with a college- and career-ready diploma, and those showing exceeding college and career readiness, such as earning credit through dual enrollment.

As well, systems rooted in college and career readiness will include indicators of course completion and success, including those showing progress toward readiness, such as timely credit accumulation along a college- and career-ready course sequence, and those showing that students have exceeded readiness standards, such as completion of AP and IB courses.

Given that this system has potentially very high stakes for districts and schools, it is essential that all indicators maintain the highest standards for data quality and transparency. The incorporation of new college- and career-ready indicators for attainment and course completion and success, in particular, will likely require strong implementation planning to ensure high levels of data quality and to ensure that educators understand how indicators are defined and calculated. Partnering with data managers from higher education for indicators of dual enrollment, postsecondary enrollment and success, as well as providers of assessments such as AP and IB, will also be critical to obtain and use the right data.

Metrics

The kind of metrics used in the differentiation and classification system will be defined very precisely, encouraging schools to help more students reach an absolute level of college and career readiness as well as encouraging them to help all students make individual progress toward and beyond readiness. The system will include both status metrics, such as requiring a school's percentage of students proficient or advanced in English language arts to meet a school-specific or statewide benchmark (e.g., AMOs) or assigning points based on the percentage in an index system, and growth metrics, such as requiring that on average, students make enough progress from previous years to be on track to a performance level tied to college and career readiness within three years.

States are taking many different approaches to growth metrics within their differentiation and classification systems. Within a college and career readiness accountability system, it is absolutely critical that growth be incorporated in a way that drives all students forward to a clear standard of performance tied to college and career readiness. It is also important that the growth metrics provide more detailed information about how much growth individual students are making and their individual likelihood of reaching important college and career readiness measures. Given that PARCC states will transition their assessment system in 2014–15 as PARCC becomes operational, it is important to start planning now for how growth measures will be calculated and incorporated over this time. PARCC is planning to commission several research papers in coming months that will assist states in this planning process.

Determinations

Your state will then need clear and transparent business rules on how to combine the metrics to arrive at an ultimate determination of the district's or school's classification. Your state can choose to do so using a **conjunctive** approach, in which the school or district must meet acceptable performance on most or all metrics. Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is an example of a conjunctive approach. It could also do so using a **compensatory** approach, such as an index, in which all metrics are assigned points based on the level of performance.

An index presents numerous benefits because it is very transparent and the values assigned to different levels of performance can easily reflect the priority goals of the state. It needs to be constructed carefully, however, because higher performance in one area — such as AP course completion — could compensate for lower performance in another area — such as high school graduation rates.

The conversation about weights to assign to different metrics has critical implications for the system's results and therefore the kinds of incentives it communicates to educators. States should determine, for example, how much weight to assign to status metrics versus growth metrics. States should provide enough weight on college and career readiness metrics to communicate the central importance of students reaching a level of performance tied to college and career readiness. (See example below.) This could become a more complex task once assessments transition to measuring college and career readiness against the CCSS in mathematics and English language arts, but not in science and social studies. It will be important for states to ensure that the aims of differentiation based on college- and career-ready level of performance are not dampened because of other assessments.

Florida's High School Accountability Weights (EXAMPLE)

Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Science	Acceleration	Graduation rate	College readiness
Performance (100) 6.25%	Performance (100) 6.25%	Performance (100) 6.25%	Performance (100) 6.25%	Participation (175) 10.94%	Overall (200) 12.5%	Reading (100) 6.25%
Learning Gains (100) 6.25%	Learning Gains (100) 6.25%			Performance (125) 7.18%	At-Risk (100) 6.25%	Math (100) 6.25%
Lowest-Performing 25% Gains (100) 6.25%	Lowest-Performing 25% Gains (100) 6.25%					
300 Points 18.75%	300 Points 18.75%	100 Points 6.25 %	100 Points 6.25 %	300 Points 18.75%	300 Points 18.75%	200 Points 12.5%

Source: http://www.fldoe.org/pdf/FloridaProposal1-31-12.pdf

Classifications

States send strong signals through the classifications they bestow on schools and districts. The strongest signals are typically reserved for the schools and districts that the metrics and determinations indicate are the lowest performing in the state. For example, though ESEA Flexibility, states commit to identifying the bottom 5 percent of Title I schools as Priority. Another 10 percent of Title I schools, such as those with the highest achievement gaps, are deemed Focus schools. The top 5 percent of schools, meanwhile, are classified as Reward schools.

To inform their system of supports and interventions and help clarify parent and public understanding of school and district performance, states should also develop classifications and determination rules for the other 80 percent of schools (as well as all districts). When the central driver is college and career readiness, all districts and schools will need support to continually improve student outcomes, particularly for students in greatest need. In addition, a continuum of classifications heightens the degree of incentives in the system — all but the very top schools and districts can aim to reach higher classifications and be rewarded and recognized for doing so.

Equity Aims

It is likely that one of the most critical purposes of your state's differentiation and classification system is to illuminate and incentivize districts and schools to address gaps in achievement, attainment, and course completion and success among groups of students based on race/ethnicity, income, disability status and English language learner status. Two broad principles are at play in meeting this intended purpose.

First, your system should ensure that student groups that start out farthest behind make the most progress toward meeting college and career readiness standards. For status metrics, you may decide to use different AMOs for different subgroups with a higher slope for lower-performing subgroups, and the ultimate target could be the same or result in substantial gap-closing. (See example on next page.) For growth metrics, you may decide to hold lower-performing subgroups to higher growth scores to close gaps. Again, as in the setting of targets and trajectories for your student performance goals (which may correspond with your AMOs), it is advisable to deeply involve stakeholders in making these decisions and monitoring their impact.

Indiana's Statewide AMO for the Hispanic Subgroup (EXAMPLE)

School year	Benchmark	Benchmark goal	Annual state assessment proficiency goal	Pass % English language arts (ELA)	Pass % math	Annual college and career readiness rate goal	College and career ready %	Annual graduation rate goal	Graduation rate %
2011–12	Baseline			68%	70%		11%		76%
2012–13			Increase by 4 percentage points in ELA and math	72%	74%	Increase by 3 percentage points	14%	Increase by 1 percentage point	77%
2013–14			Increase by 4 percentage points in ELA and math	76%	78%	Increase by 3 percentage points	17%	Increase by 2 percentage points	79%
2014–15	Three-Year Benchmark	Achieve and 'A' or improve by one letter grade from the 2012 baseline	Increase by 4 percentage points in ELA and math	80%	82%	Increase by 3 percentage points	20%	Increase by 2 percentage points	81%
2015–16			Increase by 2 percentage points in ELA and math	82%	84%	Increase by 1 percentage point	21%	Increase by 2 percentage points	82%
2016–17			Increase by 2 percentage points in ELA and math	84%	86%	Increase by 1 percentage point	22%	Increase by 2 percentage points	84%
2017–18			Increase by 2 percentage points in ELA and math	86%	88%	Increase by 2 percentage points	24%	Increase by 2 percentage points	86%
2018–19			Increase by 2 percentage points in ELA and math	88%	90%	Increase by 2 percentage points	26%	Increase by 2 percentage points	88%
2019–20			Increase by 2 percentage points in ELA and maintain 90% and continue to improve in math	90%	92%	Maintain 25% and continue to improve	28%	Increase by 1 percentage point	90%

Source: http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/in.pdf

Second, your system should be clear about how equity goals balance with overall student improvement goals in determinations and classifications. For states with systems that closely follow AYP, this balance is very clear — any subgroup that does not make AYP means that the school or district as a whole does not make AYP. For states with other types of systems, it is critical to think carefully to ensure that determinations are made in a way that singles out the most disadvantaged groups for focus and signals the types and intensity of needed interventions.

System of Supports and Interventions

With a shift to college and career readiness accountability systems, the statewide system of support and intervention also needs to shift its direction. It can no longer focus only on helping the state's lowest-performing schools and districts bring students up to minimal proficiency standards. Now, it needs to focus on connecting the full range of districts and schools with the right intensity and kind of interventions to move all students toward and beyond college and career readiness.

The system must be tightly integrated with your state's overall plan to implement the CCSS and PARCC assessments. How will diagnostic reviews uncover school and district capacity to help teachers implement the CCSS in their classrooms? How will schools and districts at various classifications participate in state and regional professional learning networks? How will technical assistance providers help schools and districts at various classifications use instructional tools and supports? While this chapter does not address the system of supports and interventions in detail, it is critical that your state think through these questions in its planning for CCSS implementation.

Data Reporting Systems

Data reporting is a critical piece of a broader approach to accountability tied to college and career readiness. Rather than accountability as a punitive system, strong presentation of data can support a culture of data use that drives continuous improvement and engagement at all levels. (See Data Quality Campaign, ***The Next Step: Using Longitudinal Data to Improve Student Outcomes***.) One of the most powerful levers to improve student performance is to simply report clear and meaningful data in such a way that they are used and understood by those who influence student achievement and attainment outcomes. A clear presentation of statewide student performance goals at the state, district and school levels can go a long way toward driving improvement through focusing decisionmakers at all levels on the priority goals. Likewise, thoughtful reports from your differentiation and classification system can ensure that the incentives built into the system are effective at creating the necessary responses throughout the system.

Although this chapter does not address data reporting systems in detail, your state should be very clear about how to leverage data reporting systems to improve the implementation of CCSS and common assessments:

- How will your state collect and report new data indicators that predict success on the CCSS?
- How will your state collect and report data that can illuminate specific areas of need for student performance aligned to the CCSS?
- How will your state collect and report data that could suggest solutions for improved strategy?

Your state can go beyond reporting by connecting data reports to clear actions. For example, your state's governor, chief or other system leader can engage in regular routines with accountable officials to review CCSS-aligned data indicators and metrics and make course adjustments to implementation strategy based on the data. Your state can connect the CCSS to student learning targets and instructional resources through a Learning Management System (LMS) made available to educators. It can also collect more data that can be used as leading indicators of progress toward college and career readiness, such as interim assessments and course grades. (See National Governors Association, ***Using Data to Guide State Education Policy and Practice***.)

Your state can think through how these shifts have implications for reporting to policymakers, such as state board of education and legislative committees; to educators through early warning data systems and other student and teacher performance management systems; to parents; to business and community leaders; and to the general public. Finally, your plan should think through how your state will engage each of these actors in the process of developing, releasing and publicizing data reports to further ensure clarity and use.

Resources

U.S. Education Delivery Institute: ***Deliverology 101: A Field Guide for Education Leaders***

Council of Chief State School Officers: ***Roadmap for Next-Generation State Accountability Systems***

Achieve: ***On the Road to Implementation: Common Core State Standards and Accountability***

Achieve/The Education Trust: ***Making College and Career Readiness the Mission for High Schools: A Guide for Policymakers*** and the full range of guides at ***Measures that Matter***

National Governors Association: ***Creating a College and Career Readiness Accountability Model for High Schools***

National Governors Association: ***Setting Statewide Performance Goals***

National Governors Association: ***Using Data to Guide State Education Policy and Practice***

Data Quality Campaign: ***Measuring the Education Pipeline***

Data Quality Campaign: ***The Next Step: Using Longitudinal Data to Improve Student Success***

Conclusion

You should now have a road map for how your state can develop an approach to accountability that will advance your state's success at improving student outcomes through the implementation of CCSS and PARCC assessments. The approach encompasses a system of statewide performance goals tied to the CCSS and other college and career readiness indicators, a system to differentiate and classify schools and districts based on progress on these indicators, a system to support and intervene in districts and schools based on their classification, and a system to report actionable data to a wide array of stakeholders. It is now time to consider how this success will be reinforced through effective engagement and partnership with higher education institutions in the implementation of CCSS.

NOTES

10. TAKE ACTION

Implementation Action VI

Inform Student Transitions to Higher Education

Part of IMPLEMENTING Common Core State Standards and Assessments

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

To download the full workbook, go to www.parcconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook

Achieve

EDI U.S. EDUCATION DELIVERY INSTITUTE

IN THIS SECTION

10. Implementation Action VI: Inform Student Transitions to Higher Education: Aligning Postsecondary Course Expectations to the Common Core State Standards and Each Other

Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- How does your system ensure consistency of rigor and expectations between and across similar developmental and first-year postsecondary courses and the Common Core State Standards?
- Does your system have clear strategies to train postsecondary faculty on the scope, sequence and expectations of the Common Core State Standards?
- How will postsecondary faculty who instruct first-year, credit-bearing courses and developmental modules/courses in mathematics and English language arts receive this training?

College readiness has become a core policy objective for K–12 systems in nearly every state — an objective often shared with the states' higher education leaders and institutions. Ultimately, K–12 and higher education systems have a common goal of increasing the number of students entering postsecondary education better prepared for success and for attaining market-valued certifications and associate, bachelor's, professional and graduate degrees.

Similarly, college completion has become a core policy objective for higher education systems in nearly every state. Higher education institutions are increasingly under pressure to graduate more students, more quickly and for lower cost while better preparing them for a changing economy. A shared vision of the final years of high school and the first years of college, and a tight alignment of K–12 and postsecondary policies, programs and initiatives, stands to greatly advance the goals of both the K–12 and higher education systems. Through deep collaboration, postsecondary and K–12 leaders can address shared policy concerns around college preparation and college success, leading to improved student outcomes across the board.

Because the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were developed through strong collaboration between K–12 and higher education experts across multiple states for the express purpose of defining a shared vision of the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in postsecondary pursuits, they can serve as the anchor for a wide range of alignment efforts. The widespread adoption of the CCSS and the ongoing work to develop well-aligned common college- and career-ready assessments — through the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and with continuing joint involvement of K–12 and higher education stakeholders — present institutions of higher education with a unique opportunity. These institutions — whether public or private, two year or four year — will have a new, robust tool at their disposal that can signal readiness for the demands of academic pursuits after high school. This tool will enable higher education to more effectively and efficiently focus on the core mission of advancing learning and knowledge to higher levels.

The CCSS will have major implications for higher education systems. The standards can serve to **define entry points** in the colleges of arts and sciences and teacher preparation programs as well as **define new and stronger roles for institutions of higher education in the professional development of in-service educators.** Higher education presidents, chief academic officers, department chairs, faculty, deans, provosts, education governing bodies and faculty organizations can all play a part in the successful implementation of the standards. Higher education leaders must be "ambassadors" of the CCSS and PARCC and are a critical link in the chain of communications with a variety of stakeholders. The stronger the pipeline from K–12, the better prepared students will be for postsecondary education.

Successful implementation of the CCSS will be characterized by efforts that involve and rely on the expertise of both K–12 and higher education leaders. You may be a higher education faculty member seeking to better understand the expectations of the CCSS in mathematics, what students will be prepared for in your college algebra course and how your course should be adapted. You may be a higher education leader looking to drive this work and reach out to local K–12 leaders to coordinate in-service professional development. Or you may be a K–12 leader who realizes the important role higher education plays in the preparation of students and teachers and wishes to work collaboratively on some of the elements in this chapter.

EXERCISE: CREATE A COLLABORATIVE WORKING TEAM

Purpose: To identify and create a collaborative working team to align your higher education system, university or college first-year courses with the CCSS. The team should include both higher education and K–12 membership to ensure coherence. Reference pages 3.5–3.8 of the workbook to inform your conversations of how the governance of this effort is connected to the overall CCSS implementation effort.

Who should participate? Higher education leadership, members of the Board of Regents, deans, provosts, K–12 liaison(s), etc. should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Brainstorm possible members of the collaborative working team.
2. Narrow the list by excluding those who would be unlikely to ever support the work.
3. Evaluate your list using the following criteria, and make any necessary changes:
    a. Diversity (sphere of influence, roles, content areas, etc.);
    b. Balance (leadership, expertise, credibility, etc.); and
    c. Potential to work together.
4. Check for overlap, make any necessary changes and finalize your collaborative working team members.

Member/type of position	Level of engagement/ understanding of the CCSS (very low, low, high, very high)	Sphere of influence (content knowledge, leadership, etc.)	Role you want them to play	What it will take to motivate them to work with you

Vertically and Horizontally Align Developmental and First-Year, Credit-Bearing Courses to the CCSS

You must seek to identify and make the necessary adjustments (e.g., content covered in CCSS should not appear) to current first-year, credit-bearing courses; developmental modules or courses; and placement assessments to achieve alignment to the CCSS and to one another, as well as increase the overall coherence of the system. Regardless of whether a student is planning on becoming a teacher, historian, radio technician or scientist, a core set of knowledge and skills should be present in first-year, credit-bearing courses. Conducting a series of vertical (progression of content, performance expectations, outcomes, etc. from course to course) and horizontal (consistency of learning objectives, outcomes, etc. among similar courses) alignment initiatives around courses and placement assessments through diligent faculty engagement will ensure that your faculty and leadership understand what students know and can do upon entry. Once alignment is completed, your faculty will be free to do more rigorous work in first-year courses and offer more innovative and targeted assistance to students in need through more effective and targeted developmental modules/courses. The discussions of vertical and horizontal alignment of courses are presented separately but should be considered in concert with one another and will overlap considerably.

You may find it helpful to develop a plan for CCSS integration into these courses. The development of a plan should be a collaborative effort. Institutions of higher education often operate with a great deal of autonomy and can be very diverse. Local buy-in, support and ownership will be critical to ensure the success of the effort. The plan should stipulate ownership and responsibility for managing the work and moving it forward — including who will lead and be responsible for executing the work, how progress will be monitored and how outcomes will be communicated.

Vertical Alignment of Courses

Examine and Align First-Year, Credit-Bearing Courses and the CCSS (K–12 Exit Expectations)

One policy goal should be for first-year, credit-bearing courses to reflect a logical progression from the CCSS. Vertical alignment is more than just content progression; the strength of the performance expectations for students when they exit high school and enter postsecondary is also critical.

You should solicit sample course syllabi, instructional materials and associated outcomes from two- and four-year institutions. These syllabi reflect courses that are representative of first-year, credit-bearing courses in both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Since the content between courses is expected to vary according to the institution/state from which it is drawn, you should sample a range of institutions. This work should be done by faculty working groups that include representatives from different sectors and institution types within the higher education community. Faculty engaged in this process should identify what knowledge, content, performances and/or skills are expected both in the CCSS and in their own courses.

By comparing first-year, credit-bearing course syllabi and outcomes with the CCSS, you can answer questions such as:

- **What concepts and skills required in the CCSS also appear in the first-year courses?**
- **Where might there be gaps between the CCSS and first-year courses?**
- **What priority standards are emphasized and/or missing?**
- **What are the current areas of emphasis, e.g., fractions, modeling, linear equations?**

Engaging in this process will likely be very similar to a state's process of establishing course equivalencies across higher education institutions to create strong articulation and transfer systems or create common course numbering systems: Examining syllabi, convening faculty, discussing levels of rigor and learning outcomes, and determining course descriptions require a high level of commonality but also accommodate differentiation and customization.

These vertical alignment exercises will complement the work under way at many postsecondary institutions to define student learning outcomes at the degree level — that is, specific definitions of what students should know and be able to do upon graduation at the associate and bachelor's degree levels.

CASE STORY: RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island has created high-level guidance documents on how the CCSS will affect higher education and what can be done by arts and sciences and teacher preparation faculty to ensure a seamless transition. For example, arts and sciences faculty can "review content courses that are specifically targeted to teacher candidates (e.g., Mathematics for Elementary Teachers) for alignment with CCSS." Teacher preparation faculty can "change guidelines and rubrics for assignments on planning instruction (e.g., lesson plans, work samples, exit portfolios) to require candidates [to] plan with CCSS in appropriate subjects." ***You can find more details here.***

Examine and Align Developmental and First-Year, Credit-Bearing Courses

Another key policy goal should be for the progression from developmental modules or courses to first-year, credit-bearing courses to be clear and logical. Just as K–12 and higher education expectations for the knowledge and skills required for success in first-year, credit-bearing courses historically have been disconnected, a similar disconnect has existed relative to the exit expectations of developmental modules/courses. Including developmental modules/courses in a vertical alignment process is critical, as the content of the developmental modules/courses must be "forward mapped" to the content of first-year, credit-bearing courses to ensure a successful progression for students.

The majority of developmental education courses are provided at community colleges and less selective public universities. In some states, developmental education courses are offered exclusively at the community college level. If this is the case in your state, it is imperative that stakeholders across your two- and four-year institutions work collaboratively to ensure that developmental education course completion requirements effectively prepare a student to meet the entry expectations of your four-year institutions. This vertical alignment better positions students to access multiple paths to degree attainment.

One approach you can take would be to solicit sample course syllabi, instructional materials and associated outcomes for institutions' developmental modules/courses to determine the strength of vertical alignment between these courses and first-year, credit-bearing courses at sample institutions. These efforts should include representative developmental modules/courses in math, English and/or writing. Again, this work should be done by faculty working groups that include representatives from different sectors and institution types within the higher education community. By comparing course syllabi, instructional materials and associated outcomes with the first-year, credit-bearing courses, you can answer questions such as:

- **What are the areas of redundancy?**
- **What is omitted?**
- **How consistent are current course descriptors?**
- **How consistent are current expected outcomes/course objectives?**
- **What are the current areas of emphasis?**
- **Do curricula for developmental modules/courses align to the CCSS?**

Beyond the course content itself, the CCSS provide an opportunity to think creatively about developmental course offerings and how those courses are organized and delivered so that students spend more time on learning the content they do not understand and less time on content they have already mastered. Historically, semester-long courses have been the norm, but some systems have begun to create more focused, modular courses or offer concurrent enrollment in developmental courses and credit-bearing courses to more efficiently bring students up to speed and simplify the path to credit-bearing courses and eventual degree attainment.

CASE STORY: TENNESSEE

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), in collaboration with the Education Commission of the States and the National Center for Academic Transformation, has worked since 2006 to successfully redesign the delivery of math and English developmental education at community colleges and select universities by leveraging technology to reduce instructional costs, increase retention and improve student learning outcomes. Students advance in their coursework when the identified gaps in their knowledge are filled rather than when the semester ends. English and math curriculum revision committees of seven to nine expert faculty have aligned developmental course curriculum with high school- and college-level expectations. Gathering feedback and monitoring outcomes is an ongoing process: A task force of faculty and TBR administrators are evaluating assessment placement policies and tools to improve placement and measurement of the impact of developmental course delivery. ***More information on the Tennessee Developmental Studies Redesign Project can be found here***.

CASE STORY: VIRGINIA

To better position itself to meet the ***2015 goals*** of its strategic plan to increase access, increase attainment and manage costs, the Virginia Community College System launched a new developmental math curriculum in January 2012 in all of its 23 colleges. In conjunction with a revised placement test, students now take up to 10 units of the modular curriculum and spend time on the most critical areas of need. Changes to the English developmental courses are scheduled for 2013. ***Specifics around the developmental education redesign effort — including the teams involved, process undertaken and recommendations — can be found here***.

Examine and Align Developmental Modules/Courses and the CCSS and Collaborate on Delivery of Developmental Courses in High School

There will continue to be students (older students, those who have dropped out of high school, etc.) who seek to enroll in postsecondary programs but do not meet standards of college readiness. Since the CCSS reflect such standards, you should examine your developmental modules/courses and make them reflect the CCSS. In doing so, you will achieve a level of coherence; every path of entry to a first-year, credit-bearing course will have the CCSS as its foundation. So, for example, if a developmental course in intermediate algebra is designed to prepare a student to succeed in college algebra, then the intermediate algebra course should reflect the content and performance expectations established by the CCSS — which have also been designed to prepare students to succeed in college algebra. Similarly, intensive summer programs offered by postsecondary systems that concentrate on building requisite college- and career-ready skills between high school graduation and matriculation to postsecondary institutions should be anchored in the CCSS.

The CCSS should be viewed as an opportunity to rethink and rebuild developmental education to be more efficient, effective and tailored to the needs of students. Developmental modules/courses must be data-driven and demonstrate continuous improvement in closing students' knowledge gaps. Aligning developmental modules/courses to the CCSS also creates avenues for you to collaborate with K–12 systems, e.g., around designing and implementing bridge courses for students who do not score college ready on the high school assessments. Students can close gaps in college-ready skills prior to needing developmental modules/courses at the postsecondary level.

CASE STORY: KENTUCKY

Kentucky is not waiting to signal a student's need for remediation until after high school. Instead the state is prescribing activities and actions in a student's senior year to close any identified college readiness gaps, including bridge courses to remediate math/English deficiencies. Through a collaborative effort with the Southern Regional Education Board, teams of Kentucky secondary and postsecondary educators assisted area school districts and high schools in designing and implementing "transitional courses" in math and reading in high school.

Kentucky administers the ACT to all 11th graders. Students who score below the readiness benchmarks for English, reading or mathematics on the ACT are targeted with the transitional bridge interventions as a strategy to promote college and career readiness and degree completion. Each course may be offered as a full semester but could also be offered as an intervention for students before or after school. ***Additional details on the work in Kentucky can be found here***.

Align Assessment Measures and the CCSS

Vertical alignment should not be limited to course content and performance expectations. Equally as important is the assessment method used to determine student content knowledge/mastery and readiness. For example, if assessments require students to demonstrate their ability to work through problems in K–12 (performance-based assessments), a similar demonstration of such ability should be included in the postsecondary assessments — rather than relying solely on a more traditional multiple-choice test.

You should re-examine college and university placement policies based on assessment measures to ensure that they are anchored in the CCSS. By refining and strengthening placement policies, you will send a clear signal as to what constitutes postsecondary readiness. Additionally, whether the assessment is state developed or national (e.g., ACT, SAT, COMPASS, ASSET), you should consider common placement standards across all institutions in your state for first-year, credit-bearing courses. This is an opportunity to send consistent, clear signals to the K–12 community — including teachers, students and parents — about readiness expectations for postsecondary education.

CASE STORY: FLORIDA

The Florida Department of Education has begun administering the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT), a placement test available to high school and entering postsecondary students that has been aligned to the CCSS. With PERT established as Florida's primary postsecondary placement assessment, the focus of the work moving forward will be to administer PERT diagnostic tests in high school to identify specific student weaknesses. Higher education faculty will customize coursework (mini-developmental classes) to address specific student weaknesses. ***You can find more information here***.

EXERCISE: ASSESS THE PLAN TO ALIGN FIRST-YEAR, CREDIT BEARING-COURSES

Purpose: To assist in any of your planning exercises and to help plan the alignment of developmental modules/courses to first-year, credit-bearing courses and to the CCSS. Completing the stakeholder mapping exercise in Chapter 4 of the workbook will help you identify the individuals most critical for the success of this work.

Who should participate? This exercise should be completed by the higher education leadership team that wrote/manages the plan with input as needed from the collaborative working team.

Directions:

1. Examine your plan for aligning first-year, credit-bearing courses and think through the questions for consideration listed below.
2. For each element, record your self-assessment of progress toward achieving the elements.
3. Identify areas or ideas for improving the element, including specific next steps and responsible parties, and record these in the template.
4. Define priority next steps.

	Questions for consideration	Self-assessment of progress	Areas or ideas for improvement
Leadership and stakeholder engage-ment	• Has an individual been identified to lead and be responsible for the work? • Does the individual have the leverage and/or relationships necessary to coordinate the effort? • Have the relevant experts been engaged? • Do the stakeholders have a high degree of influence? • Is there wide buy-in for the aspiration inside and outside of the department responsible for this work?		
Awareness and shared under-standing	• Is the plan posted or easily accessible to stakeholders? • Have all of the stakeholders reviewed the plan? • Have risks been identified? Is there a strategy to mitigate or address risks that surface?		
Established criteria for quality	• Has the working team established criteria for high quality? • Does the plan address all of the criteria? • Is the plan specific and comprehensive, providing enough detail and accounting for everything relevant? • Is there a clear timetable and set of milestones to measure progress? • Is there a process and strategy for communicating the outcomes of this effort to a broader set of stakeholders?		
Logic and coherence	• Is the logic behind the plan sound or arbitrary? • Is the plan coherent overall? • Does it align with existing activities, mechanisms and campus/institutions goals?		
Next steps:			

Horizontal Alignment of Courses

Another policy goal should be for first-year, credit-bearing courses that are similarly titled to have similar content and rigor across all higher education institutions (and for these courses to reflect a logical progression from the CCSS detailed in the vertical alignment discussion on the previous pages). Rather than look exclusively at course descriptors — the typical level of detail used for horizontal alignment — you should seek more information on the content, rigor and consistency of the first-year, credit-bearing courses. Horizontal alignment is more than just matching coverage of content; the performance expectations for students at the beginning and conclusion of a course are also critical.

This exercise will allow for a better understanding of the current horizontal alignment between courses across your system. You should solicit sample course syllabi, instructional materials and associated outcomes from a range of two- and four-year institutions. These syllabi reflect courses that are representative of first-year, credit-bearing courses in both ELA and mathematics. This work should be done by faculty working groups that include representatives from different sectors and institution types within the higher education community.

By comparing first-year, credit-bearing course syllabi and outcomes with one another, you can answer questions such as:

- **What concepts and skills required in similarly titled courses are missing from others?**
- **How consistent are current expected outcomes/course objectives?**
- **How consistent are current course descriptors?**

CASE STORY: COLORADO

The CAP4K legislation requires that all educator preparation programs at [institutes of higher education (IHEs)] align their content to the new [Colorado Academic Standards (CAS)] by December 15, 2012. The [Colorado (CO)] Department of Higher Education (DHE) and the CO Department of Education (CDE) have been working over the last two years to bring about these changes.

Additionally, CO is one of 10 states to receive a Lumina/Gates/Hewlett grant to align K-12 and postsecondary standards and assessments. A specific focus of the grant is the use of the aligned assessments as one element in the determination of a student's readiness for placement into credit-bearing courses by postsecondary institutions. In partnership with the DHE, CHE is planning outreach to IHE faculty related to alignment of academic expectations for pre-school through postsecondary students and revision of educator preparation programs. CDE and DHE have initiated plans for outreach through the Council of Colorado Deans of Education. Regional meetings with both content and education faculty will be conducted through 2012 to introduce the new standards and promote shared understanding of increased academic expectations. Specific training on the Colorado English Language Proficiency Standards will be provided to higher education faculty as a support for English language learners in mastering the CAS as well as a means of supporting all students in developing academic language to meet content area standards.

Excerpted from the approved ***Colorado Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request***.

Align Professional Development for Higher Education Leadership and Faculty to the CCSS

Successful implementation of the CCSS will not happen without engaging the higher education community in building an understanding of and support for the CCSS. Content faculty must understand how the CCSS will improve the work they do in their first-year, credit-bearing courses; teacher preparation faculty who train new teachers must make certain that new teachers will be able to teach the CCSS; and depending upon your state context and local conditions, higher education faculty who provide in-service training of veteran teachers will need a deep understanding of the CCSS. The advent of the CCSS provides new opportunities for collaboration between colleges of arts and sciences, schools of education, and faculty who provide in-service professional development on the CCSS.

Perhaps the most critical element of engaging higher education is simply improving the general understanding and awareness of the CCSS and assessments. General awareness sessions on the CCSS and assessments may be most appropriate for directors, deans, provosts, department chairs, education governing bodies and faculty organizations to build support and buy-in. You will need to consider the existing channels for delivering information to faculty and determine whether these will meet the needs of this type of awareness campaign.

Some state higher education systems have begun the work of integrating the CCSS into colleges of arts and sciences and teacher colleges, as well as into in-service teacher training conducted by higher education. In some states this work has been initiated by higher education institutions, while in others is has been catalyzed by legislative action, P–20 structures or directives from senior leadership in the state. What will work best in one state or system with a strong P–20 governing body will not be effective in a state with autonomous higher education institutions that historically have had a disconnected relationship with K–12.

Professional Development for Arts and Sciences Faculty and Teacher Educators

You can take a variety of approaches to engage higher education faculty around the CCSS. Targeted, intensive professional development will be appropriate for college faculty teaching introductory-level courses and general education courses, content faculty in the arts and sciences, developmental education faculty, and part-time faculty. This professional development may include first working to build a full understanding of the new CCSS through a detailed study of the the standards: structure, content, rigor, progression, etc. Particular emphasis should be placed on the fact that the CCSS are a significant departure from any previously developed state standards. As it is not common practice for entry-level course faculty to examine the state's K–12 content standards, this activity will be very new for many participants.

Teacher educators should look to the CCSS to signal what their own students should know and be able to do to succeed as effective teachers. Among the questions to consider:

- **How are the state's K–12 standards currently embedded in teacher preparation programs?**
- **How might this need to change?**
- **How can faculty ensure that their aspiring teachers know how to analyze and interpret standards to guide their teaching?**

Depending on the level of commitment required, higher education institutions might encourage faculty participation in professional development activities through a stipend, course release time, or other positive incentives and recognition.

CASE STORY: TENNESSEE

[The s]tate has launched two projects for teacher and principal training programs: (1) Integrating Common Core into Pre-Service Training, and (2) Integrating TVAAS into Pre-Service Training.

[The Tennessee Department of Education], in collaboration with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), has undertaken a number of key activities to ensure a solid foundation for these projects: A small team of Deans of Colleges of Education in public and private universities has been assembled to develop the plan for CCSS integration; [r]esearch has been gathered from institutions with success in standards integration into pre-service curriculum as well as national organizations focused on implementation; [i]nterviews have been conducted with several institutions regarding current practice on standards integration; [a]fter sending out an RFP, the state will choose a vendor and convene a committee to work with the vendor to develop a statewide curriculum for integrating CCSS into pre-service training. The curriculum will provide a common tool for all programs to use, but will allow for enough flexibility so that it can meet the specific needs of individual programs and [local education agencies].

Excerpted from the approved ***Tennessee ESEA Flexibility Request***.

Professional Development for In-Service Teacher-Educators

The majority of teachers in schools today will require in-service professional development on the CCSS; only a small percentage of a state's overall teaching force enter from teacher preparation programs each year. Higher education can play a key role in bridging the knowledge gaps for the majority of teachers already in the classroom and in meaningfully engaging educators through professional learning opportunities to ensure that the CCSS can be translated into the day-to-day life of the classroom experience.

Just as the vertical alignment of courses and standards between K–12 and higher education is important, so is the consistency between the preservice education aspiring teachers receive and the in-service professional development that teachers in the field receive. One way to ensure alignment between in-service and preservice education is to involve higher education faculty members, at varying types of institutions and in the fields of both education and arts and sciences, in the development of professional development modules. These modules might include tasks, lesson plans and standards mapping exercises. Additionally, the coordinated development of these modules allows for the possibility of faculty at partner institutions of higher education to administer or teach the modules to their K–12 peers.

CASE STORY: KENTUCKY

Kentucky's Council on Postsecondary Education is leading the professional development for postsecondary faculty on the CCSS and related assessments. To date, more than 2,000 faculty have participated in online modules, face-to-face workshops and webinars created to outline the impact of the CCSS on general education, developmental education and college of education faculty; postsecondary coursework and curriculum; and classroom learning. Also, as part of Senate Bill 1, Kentucky's higher education institutions have created professional development plans focused on integrating the CCSS into teacher preparation course instruction. ***More information can be found here.***

CASE STORY: OKLAHOMA

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education has partnered with the [state education agency (SEA)] to implement Common Core systems across the State. The Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP) oversees colleges of education and teacher and leader certification examinations. The SEA is currently partnering with OCTP and the Regents to develop standards, curriculum, and a certification test for Elementary Math Specialists that will target implementation of the CCSS in elementary schools. In addition, the SEA is collaborating with OCTP and the Regents to explore possibilities surrounding CCSS certification as a way of validating the work that teachers and administrators are doing to understand, master, and lead implementation of the CCSS.

The SEA representative to the Oklahoma Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (OACTE) provides regular information to the Association members and receives feedback from the members regarding implementation strategies. Additional training for the OACTE members, who are deans of Oklahoma's colleges of teacher education preparation programs, related to implementation of the CCSS was provided.

The SEA provides leadership and guidance to support teachers- and principals-in-training as well as in their entry years. The SEA conducts principal academies for new principals as well as principals in School Improvement Schools, conducts first-year superintendent training, and provides leadership coaches to principals in struggling schools. Through the 60 REAC3H Coaches and the program formerly known as the State Superintendent's Master Teachers Project, the SEA develops teacher leaders in all six regions of the State focused on implementation of the CCSS. The REAC3H Coaches will model lessons for and facilitate collaboration between educators in all regions of the state.

Excerpted from the approved ***Oklahoma ESEA Flexibility Request***.

Additional Higher Education Issues

Beyond the scope of this chapter but worth noting is the necessity for higher education systems to connect with K–12 schools and provide feedback on how well prepared for and how successful students are in first-year, credit-bearing courses. For students requiring developmental modules/courses, the feedback includes how quickly students are remediated and students' specific areas of weakness. These feedback reports may be issued by postsecondary coordinating boards, higher education institutions, P–20 organizations or a hybrid of different stakeholders. States should also incorporate developmental education module/course success benchmarks into accountability systems to reinforce and signal the critical role these courses play in shoring up the pipeline to attaining a postsecondary degree. Absent a feedback loop or benchmarks to inform the K–12 system of student (and school) achievement after high school and drive action, high schools lack important data that could inform decisions to improve policies and practices around increasing student preparedness. Higher education systems also benefit from collecting and analyzing data on the effectiveness of their developmental education modules/courses.

EXERCISE: INVENTORY OF COURSE ALIGNMENT

Purpose: To create an inventory of the alignment of CCSS, development modules/courses and first-year courses offered by your state higher education system (or college, university, etc.) and identify priority areas of work for the alignment teams.

Who should participate? The collaborative working team should complete this exercise.

Directions:

1. Audit the universe of course offerings within your higher education system/university/college that build on one another and the CCSS.
2. Consider the courses that will need to be culled, adapted, etc.
3. Regularly update this inventory to drive action and monitor progress over time.
4. Consider how these will be connected to broader routines for the effort (see workbook Chapter 11 for additional details and exercises).

CCSS/high school course	First-year, credit-bearing course	Alignment rating (low, middle, high, very high)	Rationale summary	Degree of challenge to align (scale of task, obstacles)	Next steps

EXERCISE: INVENTORY OF COURSE ALIGNMENT

Developmental module/course	First-year, credit-bearing course	Alignment rating (low, middle, high, very high)	Rationale summary	Degree of challenge to align (scale of task, obstacles)	Next steps

EXERCISE: INVENTORY OF COURSE ALIGNMENT

CCSS/high school course	Related developmental module/course	Alignment rating (low, middle, high, very high)	Rationale summary	Degree of challenge to align (scale of task, obstacles)	Next steps

Conclusion

The higher education community should play a pivotal role in increasing the coherence of the P–20 system by vertically and horizontally aligning developmental and first-year, credit-bearing courses to the CCSS and aligning professional development for higher education leadership and faculty to the CCSS. It is now time to put all this planning together by creating a set of routines that will allow the strategic implementation team to drive implementation and solve problems as they arise.

NOTES

11. PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

Establish Routines To Monitor Performance and Solve Problems

Part of **IMPLEMENTING Common Core State Standards and Assessments**

A Workbook for State and District Leaders

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IN THIS SECTION

11. Put It All Together: Establish Routines To Monitor Performance and Solve Problems

Diagnostic questions to guide your team's reading of this chapter:

- Does the system have set routines to track progress against your aspiration? Do these routines identify the actions needed to stay on track or get back on track?
- Does analysis uncover key issues, anticipate problems and prioritize them for resolution? Do you have processes in place to solve problems quickly and effectively?
- Do you have a plan for sustaining a consistent focus on the transition to the Common Core State Standards?

Establish Routines

Implementation does not end once good planning is complete. The key to driving and monitoring performance lies in establishing set **routines.** Today's state education agencies and school districts face multiple barriers to successful implementation; the greatest risk is that crises and fires will distract leaders at all levels from the core work of implementing the new standards. Routines are regularly scheduled checkpoints that help the system leader and strategic implementation team review performance, discuss major issues and jointly identify solutions to drive implementation forward. Put differently, routines force leaders to regularly check progress on a consistent set of priorities. Routines can take multiple forms — a face-to-face discussion, a brief written note or even a more in-depth report — but at their essence, all of them are dialogues about performance.

The principle of a routine is, of course, not unfamiliar to most state education agencies or districts. Examples of current routines are senior staff meetings, all-hands staff meetings and project management processes like a Project Management Oversight Committee. The one major difference between a regular interaction such as this and a delivery routine is the focus: **A delivery routine will consistently return participants to questions of whether they are on track to achieve the results that they have promised.** When properly designed, routines can be a source of structure and discipline for Common Core State Standards (CCSS) implementation efforts.

A few simple steps will allow a system to build a set of routines that fulfill this purpose. The first step is to clearly establish **what is being monitored.** This means deciding the level at which you will be doing the review, which can range from overall implementation of the new CCSS to a tighter focus on key projects like introducing model curricula and aligned instructional materials. Local school districts are also an important unit of analysis; a state department could seek regular feedback from regional staff or district superintendents on the progress being made in key districts. For states that already have significant delivery efforts under way, the overall implementation of the CCSS should fall under one or more of your overall delivery goals for student outcomes — which means that the level of review will be even more broad. There is no single right answer; you should choose a level of review that makes the most sense for your system to regularly assess the most important areas of implementation.

You must also establish **what data and information will be reviewed.** The success measures that you identified are a good starting point to answer this question. They include outcome metrics, intermediate metrics and process

milestones. The more outcome oriented a metric is likely to be, the less frequently available it usually is. This should not stop you from regularly reviewing progress using more process oriented — but more frequently available — measures of success. Because of the hard work you have done to create trajectories, you have explicitly drawn the connection between these process metrics and your expected impact on the overall outcome. When you lack outcome data, the relevant questions are: Given what I know about progress on the relevant activities, are we on track to achieve our desired results? What is the likelihood that we will deliver?

Once you have identified the data and information that you want to review, certain tactical questions then become important. Who will ensure that the data are collected? What will the process look like? How will you avoid duplication of effort? Answering these questions is important, both to preserve staff resources and to ensure that your work is not seen as more of a burden than it must be.

CASE STORY: PARTNERSHIP FOR ASSESSMENT OF READINESS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS (PARCC) STATE

In one PARCC state, the CCSS implementation effort is set in the broader context of a goal to improve 3rd grade literacy. Adopting the CCSS, creating model curricula and launching professional development on these curricula are three of about a dozen projects that are meant to contribute to this goal.

To track progress, the state has developed a feedback loop consisting of a range of evidence:

- It has defined a student outcome goal of increasing the number of students who score proficient on the 3rd grade reading assessment by around 14,000 by the 2014–15 school year.
- It has defined several leading indicators. (One related to CCSS implementation, for example, is the retention rate of teachers with fewer than five years of service in grades K–3.)
- It has created a project charter with milestones and deliverables for each of the projects, with an explicit estimate of the contribution that successful completion of each project will make toward the student outcome goal.

The strategic implementation team wants to regularly review progress — and the likelihood that its goals would be delivered — in a systematic and regular way. To do this, it instituted a quarterly review meeting that includes the senior official responsible for the goal, the commissioner and related project leaders. The challenge is to ensure a consistent discussion at each meeting, despite the fact that much of the data from the aforementioned feedback loops are infrequently or irregularly available.

To solve this problem, the team relied on an **assessment framework** — a qualitative rubric that asks several rigorous questions about each component of the plan to determine the likelihood that the component will contribute its share to the desired outcome. The qualitative judgments are combined with what data are available to render an overall judgment: **(on track),** **(mixed),** **(problematic)** and **(highly problematic).**

Assessment Framework To Evaluate and Compare Progress at Any Level (EXAMPLE)

Judgment	Rating	Rationale summary
Degree of challenge	L/M/H/VH	
Quality of planning, implementation and performance management		
Capacity to drive progress		
Stage of delivery	1/2/3/4	

KEY

L — Low
M — Medium
H — High
VH — Very High

- Highly problematic — requires urgent and decisive action
- Problematic — requires substantial attention, some aspects need urgent attention
- Mixed — aspect(s) require substantial attention, some good
- Good — requires refinement and systematic implementation

This framework can be applied at any level — the outcome itself (what is the likelihood that the target outcome will be delivered?) or a component project (what is the likelihood that the project will deliver its estimated contribution to the outcome goal?). This second view is illustrated in the figure on the next page.

Interim Assessment of Progress for One Strategy in 3rd Grade Reading Goal (EXAMPLE)

Leading indicators for a strategy

#	Strategy	Leading indicator	Q1 2010–11
2	Ensure prekindergarten–grade 3 teachers statewide receive consistent professional development related to curriculum standards.	**Retention of teachers with fewer than five years of service, grades PK–3**	**87.8%**

+

Qualitative judgments of the likelihood that each of the strategy's projects will deliver the promised impact on the goal

Projects	Judgment	Rationale
CCSS professional development		Plan relies on train-the-trainer model, needs support component
Communicate content of professional development offerings		Project charter not developed
Curriculum map and pacing guide		Not aligned to CCSS

A quarterly data set that can serve as the evidence base for a performance conversation about the strategy

KEY

- Highly problematic — requires urgent and decisive action
- Problematic — requires substantial attention, some aspects need urgent attention
- Mixed — aspect(s) require substantial attention, some good
- Good — requires refinement and systematic implementation

These data allow the department to have regular conversations about whether their activities are having the expected impact. By applying a similar type of routine and assessment framework to the projects in a CCSS implementation effort, you can establish a monitoring system that will help drive results.

Finally, keep in mind several important design principles when establishing routines. First, repurpose existing meetings where possible. The weekly leadership team meeting, for example, can be used to also review CCSS implementation once a month. Second, use existing project management practices to inform delivery routines. Where routines are already in place to review whether projects are on track, the strategic implementation team can also examine data from this process to better understand the impact of this work on teacher behavior and student outcomes. Third, there should be no surprises. The purpose of the routine is not a "gotcha" but rather a chance for the system leader and staff to remove implementation barriers and problem solve. And fourth, use routines to review progress but push for next steps. When done properly, the routine can serve as an effective forcing mechanism to create interim deadlines for action.

EXERCISE: ESTABLISH ROUTINES TO DRIVE AND MONITOR PERFORMANCE

Purpose: To create a plan for regular routines that will allow your team to monitor implementation progress, problem solve and continually drive your implementation forward.

Who should participate? The strategic implementation team should complete this exercise, with the input and approval of your state chief.

Directions:

1. Think through the routines you already have in place, how they might be changed and which routines you will need to establish.
2. Complete the template below outlining the participants, frequency, form (written notes, in-person meeting, etc.) and data to be reviewed at each routine.
3. Review your list to ensure that your routines will provide the right people with the right information at the right time.

	Participants	Frequency	Form	Data to be reviewed
Routine 1:				
Routine 2:				
Routine 3:				
Routine 4:				
Routine 5:				

Solve Problems

Unforeseen problems inevitably arise as plans are made and implementation begins. System leaders and staff need to have a process that can identify and address these problems according to their urgency and severity.

The first step is to ensure that the system is **regularly receiving the information that is needed to identify problems as they arise.** Mechanisms for this include routines for monitoring progress (see previous pages) and feedback loops for information from the field. In addition, instituting a regular "pulse check" with key audiences — both internal and external — may help you spot and deal with emerging issues before they escalate.

The second step is to create the process for **choosing which problems to deal with, in what order and with what level of resources.** Many systems miss this step: The nature of a public agency is such that there are always more problems to be solved than there is capacity to solve them. Lacking the means to address all problems, systems often become firefighters, dealing with problems in the order in which they arise and not necessarily in order of importance.

A system's approach to problem-solving should be similar to medical triage: As problems arise, prioritize them according to severity and/or complexity and assign staff resources to them accordingly. Each "category" in this system should define criteria for inclusion in it (e.g., How severe is the problem? How difficult is it to solve? How urgent?), as well as guidelines for appropriate assignment of staff resources (e.g., "ignore for now," "delegate to junior staff to handle," "solve as a team," "dedicate a portion of system leader's personal time to resolving").

Problem-Solving as a "Triage" Process: Determining How Seriously the Problem Is Affecting the Work (EXAMPLE)

Level	Characteristics of problem	Potential actions for strategic implementation team
1: Gentle reminder	• The work is **somewhat** off track • Cause and solution are relatively clear	• Personally contact individual accountable for relevant aspect of the work (e.g., phone call, e-mail) • Offer support, but ask individual to fix the problem • Follow up to ensure problem has been resolved
2: Standard problem-solving	• Problem is **significantly** affecting the work • Cause and solution are not obvious	• Designate members of your strategic implementation team responsible for "co-owning" the problem with the relevant official • Conduct collaborative problem-solving • Get additional attention from chief; develop more frequent and deeper routines
3: Intensive problem-solving	• Problem is **severely** affecting the work • Cause and solution have significant complexity	• Designate special problem-solving team • Conduct quick fieldwork for deeper problem-solving • Develop temporary new routines for reporting progress (e.g., weekly)
4: Crisis management	• Problem is among the top one or two problems of the system and is **completely** impairing the work	• Involve strategic implementation team leader full time in problem-solving • Request active and frequent participation of chief • Use system's crisis management techniques (e.g., specialized teams with outside experts, public relations blitz, etc.)

Assigning problems into these categories needs to be an explicit and regular discussion within the strategic implementation team. For this reason, someone on the strategic implementation team should lead that discussion to help the team agree on where to focus time and energy.

The third step is to equip everyone in the system with **the tools and mindsets to address issues as they arise.** Lower-level problems can be resolved by mid-level and junior staff only if those staff feel empowered to act. In some cases, this means sending a clear message that such behavior is not only allowed but also encouraged. Communicating about the triage system — and its implications for mid-level and junior staff — is one helpful way to do this. In other cases, capacity-building will be necessary. A variety of simple tools can be used to coach staff in new problem-solving behaviors. ***You can learn more about problem solving here.***

Similar Problem-Solving Approach for Staff in Your Department (EXAMPLE)

Level	Characteristics of problem	Desired staff mindset
1: Gentle reminder	• The work is **somewhat** off track • Cause and solution are relatively clear	"I will take responsibility to solve the problem myself and inform my team/supervisor of my work."
2: Standard problem-solving	• Problem is **significantly** affecting the work • Cause and solution are not obvious	"I will try to understand the problem more deeply for myself. I will not take it to my team/supervisor until I have a proposed solution and have isolated the most difficult and critical questions."
3: Intensive problem-solving	• Problem is **severely** affecting the work • Cause and solution have significant complexity	"I will actively involve my team/supervisor to solve the problem and create formal mechanisms/venues to do so."
4: Crisis management	• Problem is among the top one or two problems of the system and is **completely** impairing the work	"I will work with my team/supervisor to support the system leader in crisis management."

Two sets of tools will be useful for higher-level problems that demand more joint leadership attention. **Investigative tools** allow you to break down complex issues to discover the real source of a problem and the potential solutions. These include:

- **Issue trees** that break down larger problems into smaller, more manageable pieces for a team to solve. ***(You can learn more about issues trees here.)***
- **Delivery chain analysis** that identifies where implementation may be going wrong along the path of a reform strategy, from the intent of system leaders all the way to impact in the classroom. ***(You can learn more about delivery chain analysis here.)***
- **Field work and evidence-gathering** that will allow your team to investigate the potential issues and/or solutions surfaced by these tools.

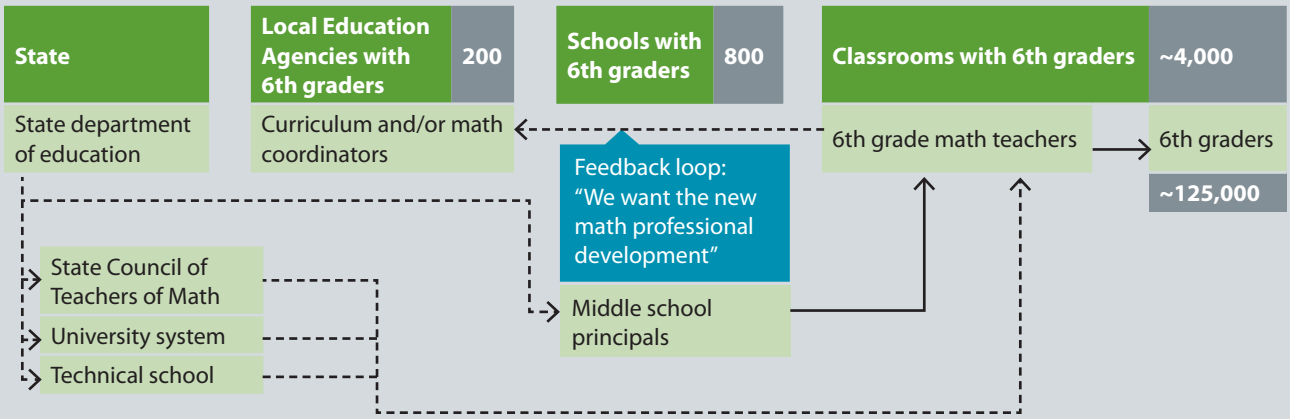
CASE STORY: USING DELIVERY CHAIN ANALYSIS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS IN A PARCC STATE

As one PARCC state rolled out its latest mathematics standards, it confronted a common challenge: The related professional development depended heavily on a train-the-trainers model and was failing to reach the classroom. To solve this problem, state leaders examined the delivery chain and looked for the weak link. They found it at the district level: Individual curriculum directors had no incentive or motivation to change their existing professional development practices — which meant that a multihour professional development session often got watered down to a 30-minute (or less) mention in an after-school meeting. The state's analysis is shown in the exhibit below; the weak link it had identified was rooted in weak relationships between the department and the relevant district personnel.

To solve this problem, the state redesigned the delivery chain to circumvent the curriculum directors in districts. It partnered with several respected state entities — including two leading universities and the state Council of Teachers of Mathematics — to promulgate the new professional development through principals and directly to teachers. Initially, this strategy exposed more teachers to the right professional development, but there was a secondary effect: Teachers who had not received the new training began asking their curriculum directors what they were missing.

Solving Problems by Finding New, Indirect Routes to the Classroom (EXAMPLE)

New delivery chain for new math curriculum professional development (6th grade)



Through analysis of its delivery chain, the state was able to identify the root cause of its problem and identify a solution for it.

Once the root causes and potential solutions of a problem have been identified, there are **intervention tools** at your system's disposal to get delivery back on track. These include:

- **Positive pressure/convening around best practices:** If implementation is going wrong in the field, convenings or demonstrations are critical tools for communication and dialogue about what should be happening.
- **Evaluation/restructuring/termination of vendor contracts:** Public agencies often underuse the leverage that they have over vendors in the contracting process. If vendor behavior is the source of an issue with CCSS implementation, aggressive contract management is the only real means to resolve it.

- **Rejection or conditional approval of a district's consolidated plans:** State education agencies also underuse the leverage they have in the consolidated planning process. If consolidated plans are to be a meaningful way to influence implementation of CCSS in the field, agencies must be willing to withhold funding until school districts and schools get these plans right.

- **Use of Title I/accountability levers to raise concerns:** Likewise, the current federal accountability framework provides for a set of potential interventions in underperforming districts and schools. These actions — or the mere threat of these — can create an opportunity for meaningful dialogue around CCSS implementation.

A robust and deliberate strategy for dealing with unforeseen challenges will ultimately lessen their adverse impact, allowing your strategic implementation team to keep CCSS implementation on track.

Sustain and Build Momentum

Routines are crucial to drive success in the implementation effort. Done right, these routines will begin to demonstrate success quickly. Even as the first positive results come in, it is crucial that you not declare victory prematurely. The hard and grinding work of sustaining progress is just beginning. These early wins can either serve as fuel to inspire further improvement or be squandered in self-congratulation. The strategic implementation team must persist through the distractions, manage those who continue to resist change, challenge the status quo vigorously and celebrate success at every opportunity. Luckily, the time spent *planning* for implementation has already given you the tools to *drive* implementation. The following five actions can help sustain and build momentum:

- **Develop the compelling and effective message and stay on it!** At every turn — every speech, every public appearance or hearing, every state or school board meeting — take the opportunity to share your three key communications messages and provide an update on implementation progress. Think of the effort as a marketing person would. Saturating key audiences with consistent messages is a good thing.

- **Keep the guiding coalition secure but fresh.** This will involve tasking the coalition with proactive actions to build public support as well as helping state or district leaders play defense when necessary. Careful attention should be given to shifts and changes in political leadership.

- **Constantly give time and pay attention to key leaders in the delivery chain.** This is especially true for those links in the chain that are weak. Are regional structures ably playing the role intended for them? Who can rise to lead the instructional improvement efforts(s) in struggling districts?

- **Connect state efforts to the national landscape.** This involves finding a state or district that people in your state or district relate to and use its progress as leverage in your own state. For a state in PARCC, for example, this might involve pegging your implementation efforts to those in a neighboring PARCC state.

- **Use data constantly.** The guiding coalition and key messengers should all know the current performance data in your state or district and refer to these numbers to reinforce why the CCSS implementation effort is needed. Data are personality neutral and can be effectively used to disarm arguments as well as to demonstrate and celebrate success.

When things are not going well, these actions will help you battle the inevitable excuses. When things are going well, they will help you maintain a sense of urgency and avoid conflating "good" with "great." ***You can learn more about how to sustain and continually build momentum here.***

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